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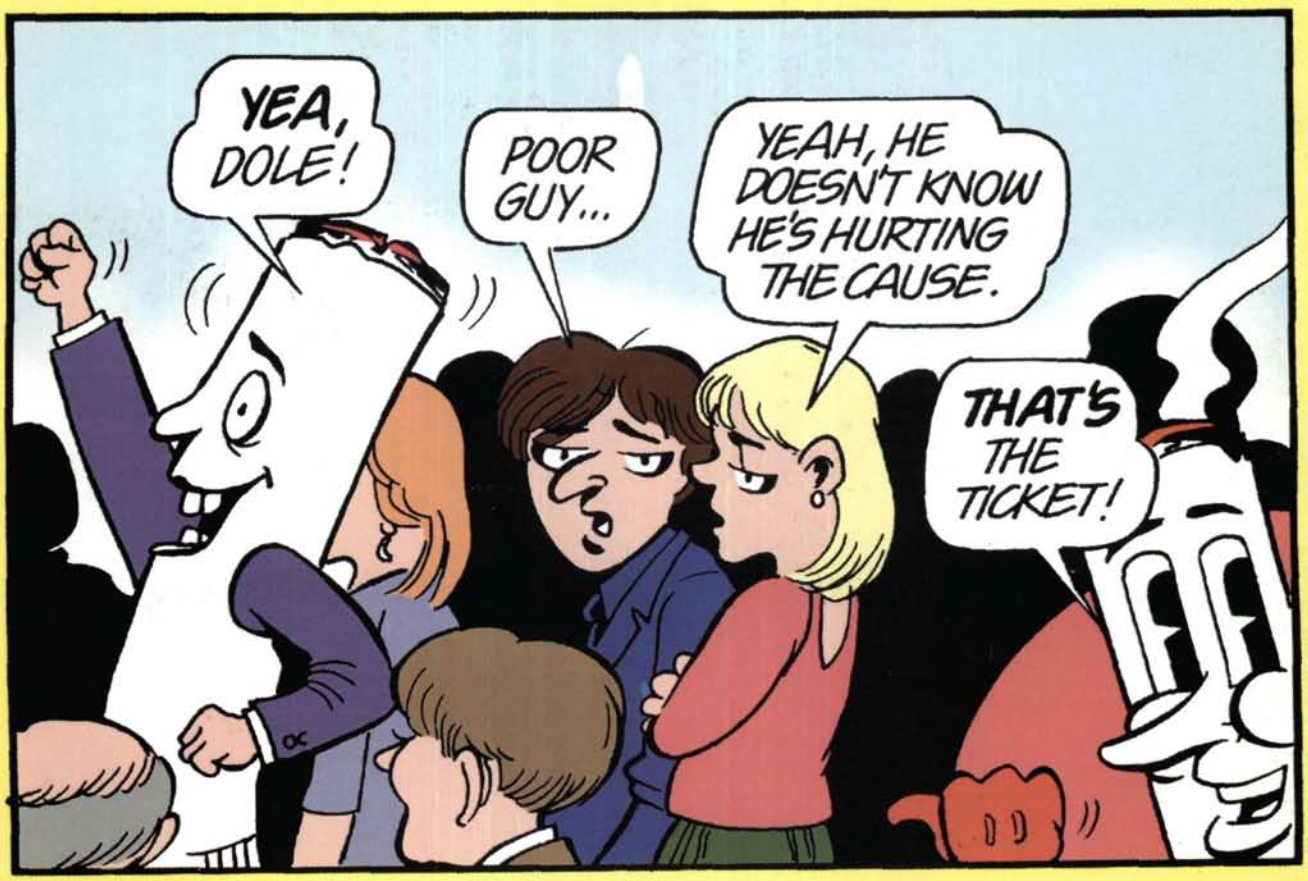

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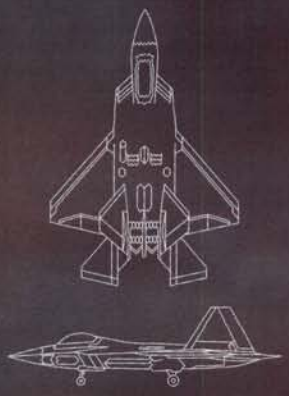

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CORRESPONDENCE

Which race

To the editors:

Shelby Steele's "The Race Not Run" (October 7) strikes me as one big bag of convoluted rationalizations. Steele simply assumes his widely publicized (though misguided) personal position in opposition to "affirmative action" to be a given, and with this as his premise he showers his readers with a number of dubious polysyllabic postulates which at best have only remote relevance to the real issues surrounding affirmative action today.

Steele and I both have known the impact of affirmative action on our lives—only from opposite ends of the stick. I am white, male and about as WASP as anyone can be, and I have benefited from white male affirmative action all my life. At a very young age, I knew that boys were more important than girls—and so did the girls. I learned early and often that there were doors that opened to me more easily than they did to persons of color—and persons of color learned it, too. White male affirmative action is preference based on color and gender. It may be informal, but clearly it is affirmative action in its most pervasive and effective form. Its advantages all go to people like me.

When Steele can show me that the informal affirmative action systems from which I benefited are no longer in operation, that will be the day I'll gladly join him in calling for the elimination of the formal ones. Until then they must be preserved, mended if necessary but preserved. This is the real issue, and Steele misses it.

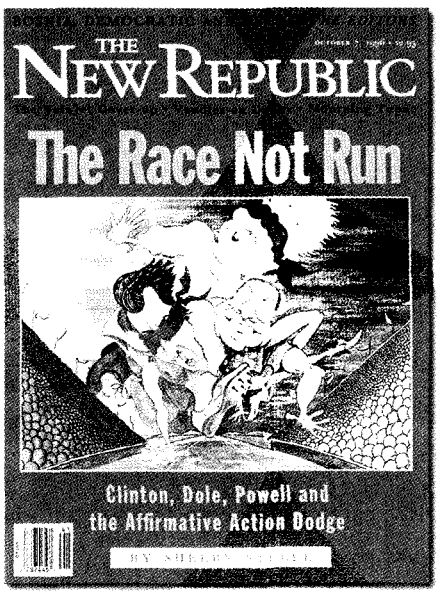
DAVE MALCOLM
San Diego, California

Valu for money

To the editors:

In "Flight from Reality" (October 7), Michael Fumento makes a basic, but serious, statistical error. He compares all of ValuJet's record with the experience of just one United Airlines flight attendant. Not surprisingly, he reports that ValuJet had fifty-nine unscheduled landings in six months, while Patricia Friend experienced only six on the flights she worked over a thirty-year period. I know someone who's lived in New York City for thirty years and never witnessed a murder. But if in the last six months there had been five murders in Pacific Grove, California, would that mean Pacific Grove has more murders than New York? Obviously not. To compare murder rates, you look at fatalities per hundred thousand people over the same time period. If unscheduled landings are an indicator of safety, you compare the number of unscheduled landings per thousand departures.

Let's do the comparison correctly. ValuJet had about 300 departures a day, or about 54,000 departures over the six-month period. So for roughly one in 1,000 of those departures, there was an unscheduled landing. Friend probably averaged about three departures per day, four days a week, over her thirty years, for a total of about 18,000 departures. If her experience was typical, that amounts to one unscheduled



landing for every 3,000 United departures. So ValuJet's unscheduled landings were three times as frequent. Does that make ValuJet less safe? Probably, and, in view of Fumento's other evidence, almost definitely. But not nearly as unsafe as his spurious statistical comparison suggests.

Finally, don't forget the big picture. Many of ValuJet's passengers would otherwise drive or take buses. So by shutting ValuJet down as long as it did, the federal government could well have caused more deaths than it prevented.

DAVID R. HENDERSON
Pacific Grove, California

Nuclear option

To the editors:

A recent Oak Ridge National Laboratory report echoes the conclusion of Jacob Heilbrunn that U.S. dependence on foreign oil is growing and that our policies are failing to deal squarely with the problem ("Over a Barrel," October 7). In fact, the Oak Ridge study projects imported oil will soon exceed 50 percent and, more importantly, OPEC will regain its dominance of the oil market because the rest of the world is drawing down its reserves at twice OPEC's rate.

A potential solution that is markedly absent from Heilbrunn's commentary is nuclear power. Already supplying one-fifth of the electricity in this country, nuclear is second only to coal as a source of power. Between 1973 and 1993 U.S. nuclear plants saved 2.1 billion barrels of oil that otherwise would have been burned to produce electricity or burned in industrial processes that nuclear electricity has replaced. Thus nuclear energy's role in reducing oil demand is not theoretical, but a matter of record.

At the very least we need to keep our existing nuclear units operating as long as possible to minimize oil use. Although natural gas is the fuel of choice for new power plants, it is a limited resource and needs to be preserved for more critical applications since it can replace oil in every sector except transportation. New nuclear plants, already being sold overseas, are expected to be competitive with coal and even safer and more reliable than the current generation of reactors. We will need these new plants to meet the relentless growth in electrical demand and replace our aging coal plants.

The solution to our continuing problem of imported oil will call on all our ingenuity in energy conservation and every alternative energy source. Thus for us to be successful will require that nuclear energy be part of that strategy.

THEODORE M. BESMANN
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Bad rap

To the editors:

Is there any meaning to: "But [Tupac Shakur's] criminality always seemed like proof that he really wasn't a criminal, that it was an act, something he was trying hard to convince you of." I don't think so. And get this, "... no one believed him when he said he was a thug for life." No one? Am I the only one who took him at his word? I doubt it. Surely the woman he raped also believed him.

Cinque Henderson's eulogy ("Split Personality," October 7) is filled with howlers like those. Shakur appeared in one failed movie but did what all "great actors" do even though he "would not sustain that integrity for long." All this is based on his few minutes on film. Yeah.

What's this about? A rapist, self-

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declared "thug" and jailbird is really someone else in disguise? Unh, unh, no thanks. It is hardly new to suggest that human beings are ambivalent about their lives. We all have other "selves" that manifest themselves in different circumstances. Most of us have selves who would commit crimes given the right situation. But, given our potential for criminality, we all make choices about how to act. For all his talent, Shakur made his decisions and accepted himself as a thug. We can do no less.

BERTRAM ROTHSCHILD
Aurora, Colorado

Personal as political

To the editors:

I offer a personalized anecdotal response to Stephanie Gutmann's "Class Conflict" (October 7) to explain why the ACLU and NOW are simply wrong on this issue:

I am a non-white female product of a Catholic, all-girls high school in Georgetown, Guyana. As a direct outgrowth of an excellent, disciplined high-school education, I now have three degrees. Because I am a well-paid consultant, and my husband is also a professional, my children attend similarly excellent and well-funded public schools in the almost exclusively white suburban heavily taxed school district that we can afford to live in. What buys me membership in that class began with my high-school education.

It is not an "enormously dangerous" presumption that girls are distracted by the presence of boys in school. It is a simple fact. In my high school, distraction was limited to our boyfriends roaring by on motorbikes at lunchtime, but it was a definite distraction. The atmosphere we learned in was, beyond this, seriously academic. Interestingly enough, Catholic school though it was, we managed to avoid learning to think of ourselves as "walking occasions of sin."

How dare NOW and the ACLU challenge the existence of a school like the Young Women's Leadership School of East Harlem on the spurious pretext that it offends some sacred principle of gender neutrality, when they allow to remain unchallenged the inequity in true need of redress—the existence in this country of a dual public school system that enables white upper-class children to thrive in tax-funded suburban schools, while minority children fight for a classroom to sit in or a desk to sit at in the inner-city wastelands that pass for schools.

VERONICA MAHANGER MACPHEE
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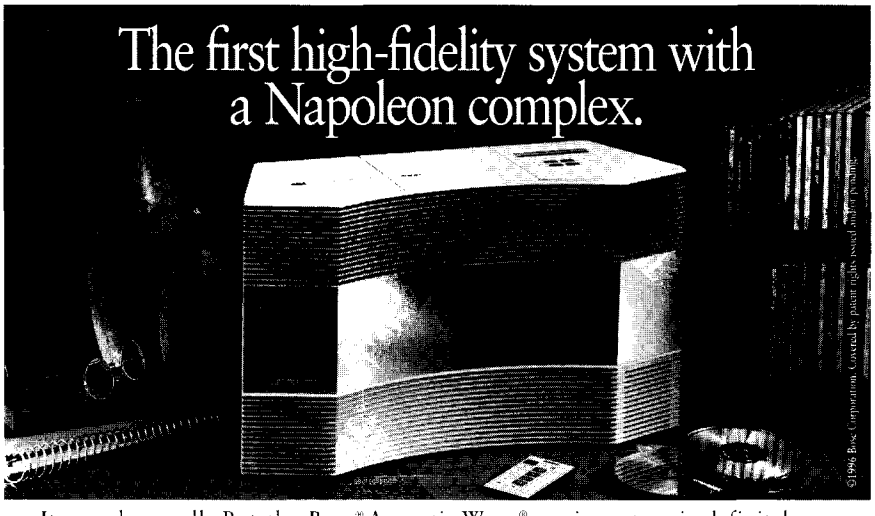

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FROM WASHINGTON

The Michael 1 man

Consider two conservative Republicans. Both love to dream up nutty free-market ideas to help the poor, like laptop tax credits for welfare mothers or zero taxes on inner-city capital gains. Both also reject racial wedge issues: One sunk plans to end affirmative action during the last Congress. The other is a long-time supporter of affirmative action who only recently hedged. The first is Newt Gingrich, whose very name terrifies most liberals into writing a large check to Bill Clinton. The second is Jack Kemp, who routinely sends lefty types into paroxysms of cooing approval.

It's not unusual for politicians to win admirers on the other side of the aisle, but usually this crossover appeal is reserved for moderates like Howard Baker or Sam Nunn, whose bipartisan popularity comes at the expense of ill will from their own hard-liners. Somehow Kemp has both won over the GOP's right wing (social *and* economic conservatives, a feat in itself) and made himself every liberal's favorite Republican. "He puts principle over party," effuses Harlem Democrat Charles Rangel. "I don't think of him as a Republican."

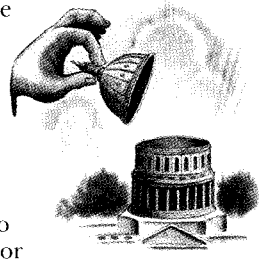
How, in a shrill partisan season, has Kemp become all things to all people? By cultivating a reputation as a floating intellectual, beholden only to ideas. "A PASSION FOR IDEAS," gushed the headline of a *New York Times* profile of the vice presidential nominee, the day after he joined the ticket. Journalists marvel at his interest in, as *Newsweek* put it, "the theories of supply-side economics, policy innovations like urban enterprise zones and unfashionable nostrums like putting the U.S. dollar back on the gold standard." This "counterintuitive" mix, as *Time* cheered, makes it, in the *Washington Post*'s words, "difficult to fit him into the traditional ideological categories."

But Kemp's set of ideas isn't idiosyncratic. It isn't even a *set* of ideas. It's one basic idea, and Kemp is the first to admit he didn't think it up himself. In fact, no American politician is easier to categorize than Jack Kemp.

Supply-side economics, to which Kemp adheres, is more than a strong belief in cutting taxes or even a belief that tax cuts raise tax revenues. It's tax rates as the unicausal explanation for world history. Consider the following passage from *The Way the World Works*, the supply-side bible by Jude Wanniski, who converted Kemp:

> Although he left the explicit tax rates high ... the economy expanded, but in so distorted a fashion that it compressed the tension between agriculture and industry into an explosive problem that Hitler sought to solve through *Lebensraum*, or conquest.

This kind of crankery is exemplified by cartoonist Matt Groening's "single-theory-to-explain-everything maniac," who asserts, "The nation that controls magnesium controls the universe!" Magnesiocentrism is only slightly less plausible than the supply-side creed; and if magnesium subsidies had the political appeal of tax cuts the idea would no doubt be embraced by a major political party. Supply-siders have developed a network of editorial writers and quasi-economists devoted to wedging the square peg of world events—Reagan's deficits, the absence of a depression following Clinton's tax hike—into the round hole of their theory.



This entails a complex web of corollaries to which all true believers subscribe. Some, like enterprise zones, have a clear connection to tax-rate determinism. Weirder spin-offs like the gold standard have some mystical connection. (In his book *The Seven Fat Years*, *Wall Street Journal* Editor Bob Bartley attempts to explain the gold standard by recounting a session at Michael 1, the posh Wall Street restaurant where the original supply-siders consorted. Arthur Laffer drew him a diagram showing that the money supply couldn't control monetary demand. Ahhh!)

In his book, Wanniski describes Kemp as "ripe for conversion when I met him early in 1976." Conversion is the word of choice for luring new sheep into the supply-side fold. "You have to really believe in it to get converts," Wanniski told me. "You're going up against a whole universe." Since the Michael 1 crowd—of which Wanniski was a charter member—rejects standard economics and history, converts accept the canon whole cloth or not at all. Wanniski can't think of a single issue on which he and Kemp disagree. The two have spoken virtually every day since the conversion, usually several times a day. (In fact, Kemp phoned during Wanniski's interview cum monologue with me.) "He'd call me up at 8:00 in the morning," he recalls, "saying, 'I've finished the book, send me another one.' "

Suppose that twenty years ago Wanniski kidnapped Kemp and reprogrammed his brain, Manchurian candidate-style, to carry out his will. A brief look at Kemp's career makes this theory eerily plausible. Start with Kemp's late endorsement of Steve Forbes during the GOP primary. Forbes jumped into the race, at Wanniski's behest, to induce Bob Dole to support the flat tax, a supply-side fetish. At first Kemp remained neutral, hoping Dole would co-opt the idea. After Dole impugned it, Kemp endorsed Forbes. Once Dole advocated a huge tax cut and a future flat tax, Kemp joined the ticket.

Dole has since soft-pedaled the tax cut and tried to divert Kemp into hounding the president about his character. But Kemp is following another master. During his debate with Al Gore, he compulsively cited tax cuts as the solution to problems such as affirmative action, defense, regulation and phlegmatic baseballer Roberto Alomar. When asked about Bosnia, Kemp criticized the administration for bombing Iraq. But Dole's position is that Clinton is too *soft* on Saddam. Lo and behold, Wanniski had pushed that same line in our interview two weeks before.

Even Kemp's famed concern for the downtrodden is an outgrowth of his tax-cutting evangelism. Kemp loves the urban poor because he thinks he has found their salvation: the only thing keeping ghetto youth from entrepreneurship is the fear that they'll grow rich and, decades later, have to pay capital gains taxes. Inner-city politicians prefer this story to standard conservative analysis because it doesn't hold the poor responsible for their own condition.

His urban supporters hoped his tenure as secretary of Housing and Urban Development would revitalize the department. While the job proved a bully pulpit for Kemp's notions, his insistence on tax-cutting dogma doomed them to legislative oblivion. Once HUD no longer served his career he lost interest in its existence, calling for its abolition in 1994. Ditto affirmative action and immigration, which Kemp turned against when presented with the chance to run for vice president on a supply-side platform.

Kemp views all ancillary social issues as mere tactical compromises. Inevitably they peel away, and all that remains is the Michael 1 man.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 4, 1996

LIPPO SUCTION

Disturbing as it is, we doubt the Clinton administration's latest mini-scandal—the secret funneling of almost a million dollars from the Lippo Group, the company owned by Indonesian billionaire Mochtar Riady, to the Democratic Party—will prove any more comprehensible, or politically damaging, than its predecessors. But perhaps it will focus attention on a related topic: the Clinton administration's continued indulgence of Indonesia itself. Last week's awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to two human rights activists from East Timor briefly reminded the world that Indonesia, a strategic U.S. ally and a growing economic powerhouse, happens to be conducting one of the most brutal wars against a civilian, minority population anywhere. Now it appears that Riady and company helped persuade Clinton to hold the 1994 Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Jakarta, a gift to Indonesian leader General Suharto, the man responsible for East Timor's pacification. Whether or not Riady specifically influenced the president's policy, the Clinton administration's Indonesia policy represents another disturbing case of what happens to our supposed concern for human rights when America's trade boosters make common cause with the apostles of "Asian values" (read: state authoritarianism cloaked in Confucian aphorisms).

East Timor, located 400 miles north of Australia, endured four centuries of Portuguese colonization before Lisbon's empire collapsed in 1975. Civil war followed the withdrawal, and General Suharto, fresh from having slaughtered up to a million indigenous Indonesians suspected of being communists, trained his sights on East Timor. Once again using communism as a pretext, he invaded in December 1975, then annexed the island a year later. International human rights groups charge Suharto has presided over the murder of perhaps 200,000 out of 800,000 East Timorese—a ratio that would make Pol Pot jealous. Torture and murder continue unabated, and foreign observers report vast wastelands of mass graves.

America's response? In 1975, after Saigon's fall, Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger bought Suharto's warnings about communism on the island and jetted into Jakarta to give him the green light to invade. Most of the arms used were American; in addition, the U.S. squelched any international condemnation of the attack. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then Ford's ambassador to the U.N., has famously observed that "the Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success."

Bill Clinton has carried on this tradition. Though in the 1992 campaign he called U.S. policy toward Indonesia "unconscionable," he's cooled down (surprise!) since taking office. When the administration agreed to hold the APEC summit in Jakarta in November 1994, dissidents clambered over the American embassy gates, but Warren Christopher simply prattled on about America's and Indonesia's common interests, promising only that "we will raise the questions as we have in the past, at about the same level of intensity as we have in the past." President Clinton has approved more than $170 million in arms sales to Suharto and wants to sell an additional twenty-eight F-16 fighter planes.

To be sure, America cannot cut all ties to the archipelago. Isolating the world's fourth-most populous country, a rising center of corporate activity, and a valuable military counterweight to China, would be self-defeating. But this is not to say, as Robert Manning, a fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute, suggested in a recent *Washington Post* op-ed, that we should blithely assume Indonesia's newfound wealth will on its own create liberal pressures that clear up any nasty human rights problems. Wealth may help foster democracy, but democracy also comes through domestic struggle, and to those doing the struggling, solidarity with the outside world matters. It is now clear, for instance, that the human rights principles enshrined in the 1975 Helsinki Accords emboldened and sustained the dissidents of Eastern Europe, and expedited their self-liberation.

America need not demand that East Timor become its own country, but it should insist that unless Indonesia meets minimal human rights standards—ending torture and permitting free religious expression to the predominantly Catholic East Timorese—we will stop selling them weapons. And the president should make it clear that, if this sanction has no effect on the terror in East Timor, he will consider others, regardless of how many contributions he gets from Mochtar Riady. •

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NOTEBOOK

FLY HIM TO THE MOON: Warren Christopher has finally exceeded his predecessors. Last week, flying between Mali and Ethiopia, he broke the record for airplane mileage amassed by a secretary of state in a four-year term. (Until last week, James Baker held the title, with 700,131 miles.) All this flying, for what? Christopher's frequent flying stands in inverse relation to his real accomplishments. Bosnia? Come on. Russia? It's one day at a time. The Middle East? When Prime Minister Netanyahu, King Hussein and Yasir Arafat met with President Clinton and Vice President Gore at the White House, the Syria-mashing, high-level-meeting-intoxicated Secretary wasn't even in the room. There is one thing, though, that frequent flying resoundingly signifies. It is the perfect symbol of a manic commitment to process as such.

THE GREAT MAN THEORY OF HISTORY: "'Streisand is one of the very few superstars who are proactive in their politics,' says Danny Goldberg, the president of Mercury Records." This perfectly uncontroversial observation appears in *George*'s "special election issue." We bring it to your attention because it is followed by this: "'She has filled the vacuum of leadership that was created when Warren Beatty got disillusioned and withdrew a little bit.'" Yep, American politics have never been the same. Congratulations to *George* for furnishing (unwittingly, of course) the Hollywood inanity of the 1996 election. It appears, incidentally, in a piece by the crusading journalist Jack Newfield.

HIT ME WITH YOUR OAKESHOTT: *The New Yorker*, too, has a "special politics issue" on the stands, and it includes a hilarious lucubration by Adam Gopnik. His subject, suddenly, is the conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott, whose spirit he sees everywhere this election. In Oakeshott's sophisticated and deeply moral defense of improvisation in human life, Gopnik thinks that he has found a defense of political opportunism. But Gopnik's analytical skills are rather limited. "In *Primary Colors*, the Bill Clinton character talks clandestinely about his métier: 'The stuff we do, the craft of it, has developed very slowly and logically over time.... All the bullshit we do is there for a reason. Fuck with it too much and it'll come back and bite your ass.' There's Oakeshott's political philosophy in a nutshell." Gopnik's pragmatizing vapors can also get offensive: "If our idea of a political hero is to be that of an original thinker who had a vision for his people, translated it into a detailed and practical blueprint, and then courageously stuck to his principles through thick and thin, the best example we will find in the twentieth century is Adolf Hitler." We don't mean to sound like old farts, but what about all those principled and practical and through-thick-and-thin visionaries who defeated the idealistic Führer and made Paris safe for fashion shows? But the kicker comes in Gopnik's apology for Bill Clinton, which is probably why *The New Yorker* is dazzled by Michael Oakeshott in the first place. Here it is: "When Maureen Dowd or David Broder attacks Bill Clinton because what he says changes according to the demands of the moment, the columnist is making a mundane version of the mistake that philosophers make when they insist that a legitimate government must have a coherent theory at its core." This is outrageous. Gopnik has no proof that the proud incoherence of the president owes anything to Oakeshott. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary. Senior administration officials tell TNR that the president is behaving the way he is behaving because he has taken to heart the late Wittgenstein.

WHOSE BENEFIT? At a sun-baked rally in Albuquerque last week, an upbeat Bill Clinton vowed once more never to sacrifice Medicaid. That promise, he told a heavily Latino audience, was part of his message of opportunity for "all of us ... without regard to when we showed up because, except for the Native Americans in the crowd, the rest of us are all immigrants." Excuse us. But didn't Clinton just sign a welfare bill making most *legal* immigrants ineligible for Medicaid? As a result, according to *The New York Times*, many nursing homes are for the first time planning to exclude applicants on the basis of their immigration status. "These are elderly, chronically ill people who would lose not only their health care, but a place to live," said Cynthia Rudder, director of the Nursing Home Community Coalition of New York State. He must have forgotten, in his eagerness to pander, that non-citizen immigrants can't vote.

PATRIARCH GAMES: Having gotten the pundits to believe that the Hasmonean Tunnel actually threatened holy places that it doesn't abut, Yasir Arafat has now done something even more incendiary and bizarre: he has laid a Muslim claim to the Western Wall, the one link to the Temple at which Jews (and Jews alone) have worshipped for nearly two millennia. Speaking in Ramallah, Arafat asserted "this place is called Al-Burak A-Sharif and not the Wailing Wall. It is sacred to Muslims, according to the Koran." The chairman is playing a dangerous rhetorical game. Also sacred to Muslims is Hebron, of course, as it is to Jews. Five hundred of them live in that city, where there was a Jewish community until 1929, when an Arab massacre drove them out. Israel wants to renegotiate the Oslo terms of the army redeployment from Hebron. "Outrageous," say the same pundits. But Netanyahu is right. Palestinian forces, which fired at Israeli troops last month, cannot be trusted to protect Israeli residents. The Jewish enclave must be guarded by Israeli soldiers in a reasonable swath of turf that connects them to the Tomb of the Patriarchs, Judaism's most ancient shrine. For the peace is safe if Hebron's Jews are safe, and Hebron's Arabs, too. •

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The Republicans spin a Dole defeat.

PARTY LINE

By Michael Crowley

"The sky is falling," declares the lead editorial in the latest issue of *The Weekly Standard*, bulletin board for the GOP zeitgeist. "This year's presidential campaign is over."

Their last hopes dashed by the lackluster debate performances of both halves of the GOP ticket, Republicans are rushing to spin themselves and their pet issues in the best possible light. Like sports fans who swarm toward the exits in a losing game, many are trying to immunize themselves from post-election recriminations by filling newspaper editorial pages with self-serving excuses before the fact. Snowflake-like, each brand of explanation possesses its own unique beauty.

For instance, how does Grover Norquist, the Friend of Newt who heads Americans for Tax Reform, and a man who has devoted his life to the tax-cut gospel, explain the coming defeat of a candidate who has staked his campaign on a massive across-the-board reduction? He doesn't. "Dole is not going to lose because people don't want a tax cut," Norquist insists. Thanks to Bill Clinton and a nitwitted press, "a lot of people don't know about it." In fact, they somehow not only don't know about it, but "think it's a tax hike." Although Dole has been talking about the tax cut for weeks now, in stump speeches, ads and interviews—often sporting a yellow "15%" sticker on his lapel for emphasis—somehow the idea is not getting through. "I personally think Watergate," says Norquist, scrambling his scandals, "is manufactured by the Clinton administration to keep people from talking about taxes."

A refinement of the tax-cut excuse is the Kemp excuse. According to Kemp soulmate and supply-sider Jude Wanniski, "the forces of austerity and cultural renewal essentially had won all the arguments up until the San Diego convention—and were twenty points down in the polls." Enter Kemp. "All they had to do was get Jack on board," Wanniski says. "Everyone at the grass roots of the party knows that's the way to get Dole elected." Two months later, the ticket is still twenty points down. But that's because Dole and the national GOP haven't been *paying enough attention* to Jack. "The public is saying, 'Jack is there, but we're not getting any commitment from the campaign,'" grumbles Wanniski.

Or are Kemp and his tax cut getting *too much* play? "The tax cut and the fiscal message is a winning message—but only if it's complemented with a morals and values message," Ralph Reed recently explained to *The New York Times*. Bob Dole "is paying the price for abandoning his natural electoral base: pro-family conservatives scattered throughout the hinterlands, a large number of whom describe themselves as 'born-again Christians,'" wrote Martin Mawyer, president and founder of the Christian Action Network, in *The Washington Post*. "Our laments for the declining American family ... were too faint to reach the GOP political consultants hunched over power lunches at the Palm, talking about tax cuts."

Or maybe that's not it either. Ann Stone, head of Republicans for Choice, says the influence of Christian hard-liners, the people that Mawyer claims are systematically excluded from GOP power lunches, have pushed a social agenda that has sensible women running from Dole. "We have to send them a message again," she says, noting that her members are alienated "because of the platform," which called for a constitutional amendment outlawing abortion.

The alibis keep coming. There's Dole's refusal to attack Clinton's character "as though it were more important to be nice than to win," scoffs Bill Bennett in *Newsweek*. Or Dole's refusal to "stand for strong and assertive world leadership," wrote *Standard* editor Bill Kristol and contributing editor Robert Kagan, representing interventionist neocons, in the *Times*.

At this juncture in the race, there's little point in holding one's tongue. Even lower-level aides can't seem to feign the requisite campaign sunniness. "Boy, that's unfortunate," ruefully muses Ralph Reed's flak Mike Russell over Dole's poll numbers. "Everyone is thinking about what happens when the pulse goes flat." The assistant to one prominent conservative columnist even offers her own spin, "just between you and me." (She's among the few conservatives who actually admit Clinton really is a tough candidate.)

Some of the recriminations have taken on a nasty, resentful edge, akin to a backlash against a crumbling monarchy that is losing its hold on the countryside. The *Standard* has gone to great lengths to unstick itself from Dole's star. In the latest issue, the editors get ousted Dole spinner Mike Murphy to suggest Dole "create a culture more like a campaign and less like the Kremlin." Kristol concurs: "There is something Politburo-like to the Dole campaign," he says. "No one's willing to bring bad news to the boss—they report cheerfully that steel production is up 400 percent. It is ultimately the Brezhnev campaign," he continues. "There has been a certain hostility to constructive criticism."

Fed up with Kristol's dissent, Dole's communications director John Buckley recently dubbed him "the first rat." "Kind of an unfortunate metaphor," Kristol notes. "It does imply that the ship is sinking." •

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BERLIN POSTCARD

HARD HATS ÜBERALL

By Liesl Schillinger

Berlin is in rubble. The entire city, all 350 square miles of it, looks like a cross between the Götterdämmerung and a Play-Doh Fun Factory, especially at night, when the monumental operas and museums, theaters and churches, each one a titanic stone tomb, glow eerily with floodlights, throwing the building cranes above them into high relief. Even by day, the construction—or, more practically speaking, the destruction—is impressive. Aqueducts in pink, red, green and lavender merrily thread their way through the city, forty feet above the traffic, siphoning off the groundwater that the digging produces. Huge city blocks, girdled by hurricane fences, are turned into corrals for slowly rolling steam shovels, cement mixers and trucks.

Berlin looks more like 1946 than 1996. Only this time, the people carting the bricks and laying the mortar are not the bereaved wives, widows, mothers and daughters known as the *Trümmerfrauen*—the Rubble Women—but (often) foreign workers, overalled and hard-hatted, rebuilding the world capital for a handful of Deutschmarks an hour, with no benefits and no citizenship to follow. Berliners deplore the traffic snarls and mourn the passing of the decades when children could play soccer on the overgrown field in front of the Reichstag.

Some Berliners question why the city is being rebuilt at all. "I didn't want Berlin to be the capital again," Bärbel, a young blond mother on a bicycle, grumbles, her two towheaded sons riding beside her like ducklings on wheels. "And why are they building so much?" she continues. "We can't fill the buildings we have already." It is a question that the city planners find convenient to ignore; their logic is not so much "build it and they will come" as, simply, "build it." As much as the city changes, one thing remains the same: Ernst Bloch's dictum that "the mortar in Berlin is never dry."

Berlin, even when it was intact, was never a draw for sightseers and honeymooners on the scale of Paris or Venice, although it did draw a good number of sensation-seeking writers and avant-garde artists and actors. It lacked the easy crowd-pleasing appeal of other European capitals. There was no Eiffel Tower, even if there was a rather sad Fritz Lang-y knockoff called, unpoetically, the *Rundfunkturm*. There were hardly any cozy bistros to speak of, just superannuated pastry hangouts and jowly beer bars. Since the war, there have been various ingredients of *Achtung frisson* to sample, such as the bombed-out Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, Checkpoint Charlie and the Wall, but these were hardly draws for daytripping aesthetes. In other words, Berlin's chief attractions were political, not cultural. But at last Berlin has a tourist attraction no other European metropolis can top: chaos, and an architectural blank slate that is filling itself in while-u-wait.

The catch is, accidental tourists don't know that Berlin's main attraction these days, as the t-shirts blare, is the *Grösste Baustelle Europas*!—the biggest construction site in Europe!—until they spill out of the airport bus and find themselves in a forest of building cranes. Even well-traveled Europeans can be taken aback—such as the Dutch couple who walked up to me near the Reichstag wasteland, hugging their maps as if they were lifebuoys. "We want to look at the Reichstag," the wife told me, in German. "Do you know where it is?" I pointed across the road to the fences, the dust and the herd of shirtless, helmeted workers. The couple stared in disbelief. "It's a wreck," the wife exclaimed and, turning to her husband, said accusingly, "I told you we should have gone to Paris." Like thousands of others, they want to ask the Berlin tourist board, where did you put the sights?

Several years into the grand project, Berlin got wise and, making a virtue of adversity, unleashed a PR blitz to teach tourists to see the wreckage itself as an unbeatable monument. Late this July, a two-month-long festival called *Schaustelle/Baustelle* or, loosely, Showplace/Workplace, kicked off, mingling hundreds of free public entertainments with visits to construction sites—just the thing for when that honeymoon starts to drag. The festival will return next summer, by popular demand. And then there's the Info-Box, a $6 million red cube that went up last October. It floats above the Potsdamer Platz like an enormous Lego on steel stilts and feeds 10,000 visitors a day a glut of statistics to gorge themselves on, along with a panoramic view of the disemboweled Potsdamer Platz. Inside the three floors of the Info-Box, interactive exhibits display battalions of builders' models in plastic, wood and glass; legions of glowing lighttubes tracing future rail lines; heroic busts of planners and architects; and stupefying tables and films detailing sand and concrete supply maintenance. The Pompidou Center it's not.

Asked where the pedestrian zones and particular tourist attractions will go in the master city, the planners shake their heads. "We won't have specific pedestrian areas," says an adviser to the Senate Administration for City Development and Environmental Protection. "Restaurants and cafés in pedestrian zones get no business after shops close down." And yet this state of affairs may not last. In the first week of July, the *Bundesrat* voted in longer store hours for Germany. Now, stores may stay open as late as 8 p.m. Given free-market pres-

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sures, other radical changes are bound to follow. If you ask officials why the development projects have all been undertaken simultaneously, they don't understand the question. "Of course the city will continue to develop in certain ways, but we want to keep control," the city planner answers uncertainly.

The logic behind this architectural free-for-all is not really so hard to fathom. Whatever the cost, some influential Germans felt so strongly that Germany needed a world-class capital—immediately—to match the country's brave new unified status, that they made it happen, willy-nilly. The new Berlin may be used by millions of others, but it is made for them. As a foreign policy expert in Bonn explained (after deploring, with all the anger of abused *amour propre*, the recent attacks on Germany in the British tabloid press), "Germany is ready to take the role it should have, geographically, economically and, above all, historically, as the center of Europe."

Not all Germans agree. During the kickoff week of *Schaustelle/Baustelle*, the Social Democratic Party leadership struggled valiantly, and vainly, to defer the move of the Bundestag from Bonn to Berlin a few more years, on the laughable grounds that Berlin did not offer "enough room." (As Bärbel noted, Berlin has too much room as it is and cannot rent out existing offices.) Activists and angry citizens protest that the billions of dollars going to Berlin are being spent by massive developers, for massive developers, and they have yet to see any result of their city's renewal, other than terrible traffic and ruined bike paths.

Still, delicate Belle Epoque lampposts stand amid the trucks and drills, and the Galeries Lafayette has opened on old East Berlin's Friedrichstrasse. Impromptu cafés have arisen among the scaffoldings and dirtheaps. Students cycle down Unter Den Linden, backpacks thudding. A Polish boy looks up at the Brandenburg Gate and marvels, "The cranes are terrific!" A British engineer comments, "It'll never be Venice, but if anyone can do it, they can."

In the *Gendarmenmarkt*, the supreme stage-set of unified Berlin, the symphony orchestra plays Schubert in the luscious cream and gilt *Konzerthaus*—formerly *Schauspielhaus*—which was restored in an earlier wave of renewal. At intermission, Berliners sip champagne in the pale green reception hall and stroll among still more glass showcases, more architectural models and more exhibits—showing the grand form that their *Gendarmenmarkt* will take when the new construction is done. There will be gardens, cloisters, terraces—"places," a sign explains, "of peace and recovery, paradisal worlds like the garden of Eden." The symphony-goers dutifully read the abundant texts and return at the bell to their velvet seats. The music plays, the cranes are still, the sun sets and everywhere linden blossom hangs in the air. The shape of a new city is emerging, rising out of the dust. See it now, before the mortar dries.

LIESL SCHILLINGER is a columnist for the London *Independent on Sunday*.

FORT MCNAIR POSTCARD

THE OLD LEFT

By Joyce Milton

Who would have thought it possible? The CIA and the NSA were giving a cocktail party, and among the guests were convicted atomic spy Morton Sobell, Marshal Perlin, longtime spokesman for the remnant of the Rosenberg defense committee, and attorney John Lowenthal, a defender of Alger Hiss. Sobell, once the overlooked co-defendant of the Rosenbergs, the one who declined to testify on his own behalf, has grown feistier with age. Dressed in a white sweatshirt, his shock of white hair pulled back in a ponytail, he seemed to enjoy striding up and introducing himself to retired FBI agents and young NSA staffers just to see what their reaction would be.

The occasion was the Venona conference, held at the Army War College at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. last month to celebrate the third and final public release of intercepted World War II-era Soviet documents, whose painstaking decoding over many years revealed the scope of Soviet espionage activities in America. Clearly, the CIA and NSA's decision to make this story public now is in part an attempt to counter the embarrassment over the Aldrich Ames scandal and to answer rumblings from congressmen who wonder if the agencies have outlived their usefulness. But, whatever their motives, the intelligence services made their point. When the Army's Signal Security Agency (an NSA forerunner) began trying to unscramble coded Soviet diplomatic cables in February, 1943, the work held little promise. At the time, the OSS actually avoided looking too closely at possible KGB operations abroad for fear of offending our Soviet ally. When pages from a KGB code book were passed to an OSS officer by a Finnish source, President Roosevelt ordered them returned to the Soviets.

Years of painstaking work were necessary to confirm what the FBI, separately, had begun to suspect early that same year: American members of the Communist Party USA were passing wartime secrets to Soviet agents. Soviet penetration was so successful that the KGB actually knew about the Manhattan Project before J. Edgar Hoover did. Venona itself was so secret that only a handful of high-level intelligence officers were aware of the work, and, as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan pointed out at the conference, there is no record that President Truman was ever briefed on the subject. Without Venona, the Rosenbergs' prosecution would very likely have been impossible, and the charge that American communists spied for the Soviets during World War II might have remained

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forever unproven. Even so, Venona merely offers a glimpse of KGB activity on American soil. Only a small percentage of cable traffic was ever decrypted.

Past and present personnel of the NSA, CIA and FBI in the audience of the War College auditorium seemed scarcely to know what to make of the pro-Rosenberg faction, which was much in evidence. The Rosenbergians dominated the discussion period after every panel, but their questions were often incomprehensible to those not schooled in the arcana of conspiracy theories. Marshal Perlin issued a thunderous call for declassification of the Venona group's working papers, seemingly unaware that his position has grown weaker with every new document that comes to light.

But the most poignant example of post-Venona confusion was Michael Meeropol, the elder Rosenberg son, who appeared on the final day of the conference. Rising from his seat, Meeropol challenged ex-FBI counterintelligence specialist Robert Lamphere to explain his position on the execution of Ethel Rosenberg. As it happened, Lamphere had addressed the subject minutes earlier. Speaking with evident sincerity, Lamphere said he had rarely been consulted for his views on sentencing. In this instance he *was* asked, and had recommended against the death penalty for Ethel for two reasons—the relatively small amount of evidence against her and the fact that she was a mother of two young sons.

No reasonable person would expect a son to endorse the execution of his parents. But Michael Meeropol has worked himself into a difficult position. In the final months of the Rosenberg defense campaign then-10-year-old Michael and his 6-year-old brother were used at rallies to generate sympathy, and four days before the Rosenbergs died at Sing Sing Michael approached the White House gates to deliver a handwritten letter to President Eisenhower. The text read in part, "Please let Mommy and Daddy go and not let anything happen to them. If they come home Robby and I will be very happy." After the executions, the Rosenbergs' attorney, Manny Bloch, and members of the committee placed the children with Abel and Anne Meeropol. (Abel Meeropol was better known as the songwriter Lewis Allan, composer of the Billie Holiday number "Strange Fruit.") The boys' placement was unsuccessfully challenged in court by Rabbi S. Andhil Fineberg, who questioned whether their futures should be decided by the same people who had exploited them for the purposes of Communist propaganda. In the Meeropol brothers' book, *We Are Your Sons*, they describe this challenge as an attempt "to 'kill' us by removing us from people who shared our parents' politics."

After growing up in relative anonymity, the Meeropols went public in the mid-1970s. Robert has kept a relatively low profile, but Michael has vigorously defended his parents in appearances at college campuses. Now Venona has shaken Meeropol's faith in the legacy expressed in one of his father's last letters to Manny Bloch: "Never let them forget the truth of our innocence." He can no longer say that his father was innocent. But even as he concedes that Julius Rosenberg probably was a spy, he remains angry with those who reached this conclusion long ago. When Meeropol and I debated at Swarthmore College in April, much of his talk addressed the death sentence meted out to Ethel Rosenberg, virtually paraphrasing the arguments against it that Ronald Radosh and I made in the early 1980s in our book, *The Rosenberg File*. However, far from acknowledging that he now agrees with me and Radosh on many essential points, Meeropol circulated a paper among the audience accusing us of being dishonest scholars and bad people generally.

Undoubtedly, Meeropol's continuing problem with *The Rosenberg File* is that it shows how the Communist Party's international campaign for clemency actually destroyed what slim chances remained of averting the double execution. Even if President Eisenhower wished to commute Ethel's death sentence, he couldn't do so without giving the impression that he was backing down in the face of Communist demonstrations at home and in Europe.

If there was a lesson to be drawn from the Venona conference, it was that everything changes, even the CIA, but the American left changes scarcely at all. It was strange to stand in the atrium of the War College's Theodore Roosevelt Hall and count the number of attendees who started out as leftists only to find that, as a result of some act of independent thinking, they were assumed to have gone over to "the other side." In some cases, stung by the lack of tolerance for dissent among their own, they did go over. Thus has the left managed to create more Republicans than all the country club weddings held over the last two decades put together.

I doubt, sadly, that the Venona releases will put an end to the tedious debates over the guilt of the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss. The anti-anti-communists are regrouping. In May *The New York Times* ran an interview with Joseph Rotblat, former Manhattan Project physicist and organizer of the Pugwash conferences, who endorsed the view that atomic espionage was justifiable in order to create a "level playing field" between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. And when I debated Michael Meeropol at Swarthmore, our fellow alumnus, former *Nation* editor Victor Navasky, who served as moderator, actually posed the question, "Espionage, is it really so wrong?" The notion that spying can serve a higher purpose, provided it is done by the right people, was exactly what lured the young Kim Philby, Donald Maclean and Anthony Blunt, not to mention their counterparts in America, into betraying their countries. Even in the post-Soviet era, nothing good can come from a brand of cynicism that suggests that creating a "level playing field" between democracy and the totalitarians makes the world a better place.

JOYCE MILTON's most recent book is *Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin* (HarperCollins).

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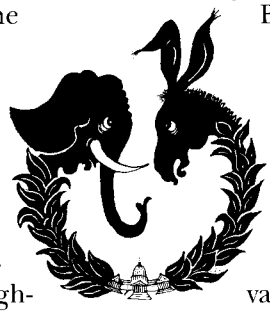
RACE FOR THE SENATE: ILLINOIS

WINDY

By Stephen Chapman

Illinoisans have a rare treat this year: a closely contested race for the U.S. Senate offering two smart, able, principled and likable candidates, Democrat Dick Durbin and Republican Al Salvi. Too bad you'd never know it from the campaign they've waged, which has been nasty from the start. Like hundreds of others around the country, the race has become a war of predictable epithets, with Republicans shrieking, "Liberal!" and Democrats yelling back, "Extremist!" But Democrats here are busily wriggling rightward like in other states. In fact, they may be content with the label. Illinois has elected plenty of candidates as liberal as Durbin to high statewide office. Paul Simon, the retiring senator he hopes to replace, voted against the welfare reform bill, and ran for president in 1988 declaring, "I'm not a neo anything!" His junior counterpart, Carol Moseley-Braun, gets ratings in the 90s from Americans for Democratic Action. The state's last Republican senator was Charles Percy, for years a darling of the GOP's Rockefeller wing. Unlike Michigan and Ohio, neighbors with whom the state is often lumped politically, Illinois hasn't elected a true-blue conservative to a high state office for decades. The liberal label, equivalent to pneumonia in many states, is here no more fatal than your average cold. It's a surmountable obstacle—as Simon proved in 1984 when he evicted Percy even as Ronald Reagan buried Walter Mondale with a 56-43 margin.



Illinois has a tradition of producing Democrats who stand out from the crowd—from Senator Paul Douglas, a University of Chicago economist who enlisted in the Marine Corps at age 50 to fight in World War II, to Adlai Stevenson, father and son, to Simon, a bow-tied Lincoln biographer and newspaper editor who radiates prairie rectitude, to Moseley-Braun, the Senate's first African American woman. But Durbin, a congressman who has spent his entire adult life in government, is the generic pol—white, middle-aged, portly and a bit stolid. The stilted talking-head TV spots he used in his primary campaign, which seemed crafted to make him look like the dullest man this side of Alan Greenspan, only accentuated these qualities. His legislative record, Clintonian in its modesty (he's promoted ethanol and discouraged smoking), helps insulate him against the charge that he's a vociferous left-winger.

Defining the opponent will be especially crucial because neither candidate is well-known beyond his home base. Durbin has not run for statewide office since 1978, when he made a sacrificial bid for lieutenant governor. Salvi's electoral experience consists of two terms in the state legislature and an unsuccessful bid for Congress. Durbin, who has represented the state capital of Springfield in Congress and the legislature for the last thirteen years, will probably hold his own in traditionally Republican downstate areas—"downstate" being a euphemism for everything except Chicago and its surrounding counties. Thanks to the presidential race, he need not worry about generating enthusiasm among straight-ticket Democratic voters in the city of Chicago who wouldn't know him from Dick Darman.

The real battleground, however, will be in the Chicago suburbs, where there are plenty of Republicans and independents who voted for Bill Clinton and who flee from any candidate with pronounced conservative colors. Lately, Durbin has been hammering his opponent for saying Social Security should be privatized. But he is also relying on other staples of the soccer-mom pander: abortion and gun control. The Republican favors a ban on abortion except to save the life of the mother and voted against the federal assault weapons ban and the Brady Bill. Durbin has reminded voters about the Illinois State Rifle Association publication that on one page praised Salvi and on another warned of tiny computer chips that the federal government could implant in people to track their movements and control their thoughts.

These issues are likely to play even better in Illinois than elsewhere. Illinois, despite its vast rural stretches, conspicuously lacks the deep suspicion of gun control found in some other states; even the famously conservative Representative Henry Hyde voted for the assault weapons bill. Nor, despite the concentration of Catholics in Chicago, has the state been particularly receptive to the anti-abortion movement.

Durbin's main obstacle is the Salvi persona. With choirboy looks, five towheaded kids and a soothing demeanor that belies his career as a plaintiff's attorney, the 36-year-old Republican is hard to demonize. Durbin's challenge is to create an indelible and unflattering portrait of Salvi before his opponent has fully introduced himself to voters. So far that approach has been only a qualified success. A *Chicago Tribune* poll published October 13 gave Durbin a 42-35 lead, though Bill Clinton is ahead by a whopping twenty-two points.

Salvi's biggest challenge is overcoming the state's stubbornly centrist character. Illinois has produced such conservative luminaries as Ronald Reagan, George Will and Phyllis Schlafly but has never followed their lead. Despite the state's sizable electoral vote, its most powerful Republicans have long been passed over for national office by their party because they are not conservative enough—and can't afford to be if they want to survive at home. Jim Thompson got the nickname "Governor for Life" during his four terms from 1977 to 1991, but his ties to orga-

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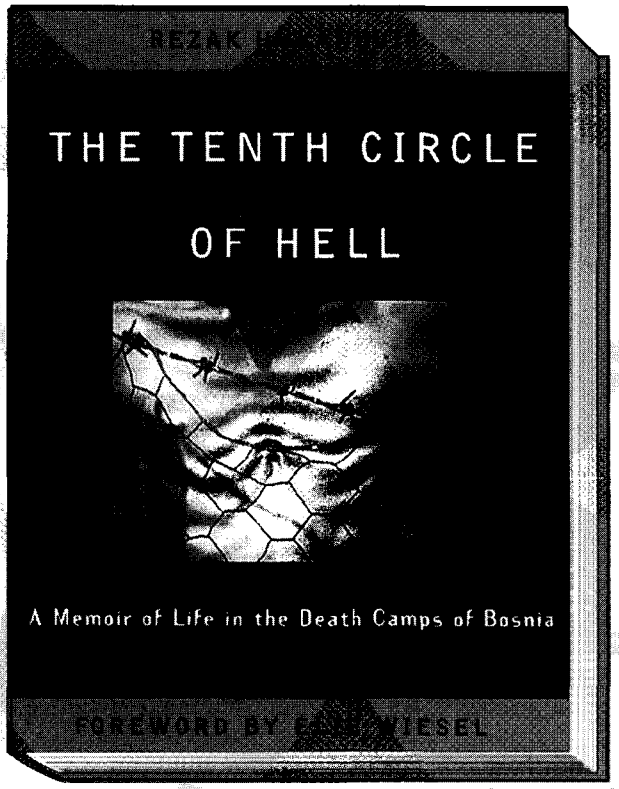
Whatever Happened to "*Never Again*"?

In the early part of this decade, as the Bosnian civil war shattered the Balkans, the evening news carried reports of savage brutality being carried out against civilians, euphemistically described as "ethnic cleansing." Now Rezak Hukanović, a Bosnian Muslim, bears witness to these atrocities in the first autobiographical account of life in the Bosnian death camps. Captured when the Serbs occupied his town, Hukanović describes the horrifying torture, rape, and grisly murder that was routinely carried out with sadistic glee by his former friends and neighbors. His powerful testimony reminds us of a lesson we should have learned fifty years ago—that "never again" means "never again."



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—David Rieff, author of *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West*

"If you read but one book about the wars in the former Yugoslavia, it should be Hukanović's harrowing memoir of time spent in the death camps of Bosnia."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred

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nized labor, his habit of raising taxes and his support for abortion rights stymied his palpable ambition for higher posts. Though Governor Jim Edgar, a popular second-term incumbent, was frequently mentioned as a possible vice presidential candidate this year, Dole knew that picking him would assure bitter protests from the right.

It's not that the state GOP doesn't want to nominate right-wingers, it's just that party hacks have learned from painful experience that right-wingers don't tend to win. Moseley-Braun ran a dismal general election campaign in 1992 but still beat Rich Williamson, a former Reagan White House official, by ten points. Her predecessor, Alan Dixon, trounced conservative state representative Judy Koehler by a 2-to-1 margin in his 1986 re-election bid. Thanks to the pragmatic Thompson and Edgar, by contrast, the GOP has controlled the governor's office for nearly twenty years. The moderates' dominance, however, has bred complacency. Salvi stunned establishment Republicans by upsetting Lieutenant Governor Bob Kustra, who never took his opponent seriously enough to make the case for himself. Salvi and Edgar both say the party is now unified behind the Senate nominee, but Salvi was so estranged from establishment Republicans that Speaker Lee Daniels had to contact a reporter for the Republican nominee's home phone number so he could congratulate him the morning after the primary.

Salvi is trying hard to portray himself as mainstream. When attacked by Durbin for endorsing a ban on abortion, he replies that his position is the same one Durbin held for years, or starts talking about the "partial-birth abortion" bill vetoed by President Clinton. When asked earlier in the race about assault rifles, he nearly alienated the NRA by saying he wouldn't try to repeal the ban—though he later changed his mind. And, while Durbin harps on gun control and abortion, Salvi wastes no subtlety flogging anti-government themes, running commercials that paint his opponent as a "big-spendin', big-taxin', pay-grabbin' liberal." Asked to name the major issues in the race, he replies, "Taxes, taxes and taxes."

The Durbin-Salvi race will test whether the country's recent rightward shift extends to Illinois. With a solid but uncharismatic Democratic nominee for an open seat, and a soft-edged champion of their own, Illinois' conservative Republicans have a chance to gain new respectability. In the past, they have failed by running weak candidates. Salvi is not one, and in many ways he's just the kind of guy whose combination of bedrock conservatism and sunny optimism makes national Republicans sit up and drool. Unfortunately for him, he's running in one of the few states that still likes its Republicans moderate. An admiring Phyllis Schlafly inadvertently put her finger on the problem when asked if Salvi was Illinois' most conservative Senate candidate in her memory. She replied, "He's more conservative than any that have won."

STEPHEN CHAPMAN is a syndicated columnist on the staff of *The Chicago Tribune.*

RACE FOR THE SENATE: KANSAS

RIGHT TURN

By Alissa Rubin

Mary Jane Bradley can smell victory. One day soon, she thinks, the Republican Party in her state of Kansas will be dominated by social conservatives at every level. "We got the state House in 1994, we'll get the [state] Senate this time, and then we'll go for the big one, the governor," says Bradley, a Republican activist and public school teacher from Topeka. What about this year's race for Bob Dole's former Senate seat? "Oh, we'll get that," she says, displaying her confidence in Sam Brownback, an affable young leader of Newt Gingrich's freshman class and a favorite of Christian conservatives.

Karen Clark, who lives in Wichita, Kansas, is also a public school teacher and a lifelong Republican, but the political trends that put Bradley in such a cheerful mood make her angry and afraid. "The Republicans have just gone really far right," she says. "Their view on the feminine issues—abortion—it's the one issue that has pushed me off my party. They want to tell us how to live." Clark will be voting for Brownback's Democratic opponent, stockbroker Jill Docking.

The campaign to take Dole's Senate seat has gotten national attention chiefly because of the man who relinquished it. But there's more to the story. Most importantly, the race is a test of the religious right's success in Kansas. It is also a contest in which women voters may make all the difference. This is not just because of the so-called gender gap. "Women represent 53 percent of the electorate in Kansas," says Brownback's campaign manager, David Kensinger. "They will elect the next senator."

Whether that senator is Brownback depends on the extent to which moderate Republicans—especially women like Clark—cross party lines to distance themselves from Christian conservatives. Brownback is working hard to keep defectors to a minimum. To be sure, he has the backing of groups such as Kansans for Life and Focus on the Family. (A Christian volunteer in a prior Brownback campaign sent out an unofficial fund-raising letter describing him both as "Christ-like" and as someone "who keeps in mind that he is an ambassador for Christ.") But Brownback himself has been sounding the themes of political reform, not religious revival, talking more about term limits than abortion.

It would be tempting, in fact, to call Brownback the Christian conservatives' stealth candidate, except that he's not secretive about his conservatism: he just touts it mainly for the faithful, while talking up safer issues like

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runaway federal spending to mainstream voters. Kansas supporters say he's simply showing good Midwestern manners: "It's a little unpleasant or impolite to bring up things like homosexuality or abortion," says Paul Rosell, a prominent anti-abortion activist and the Republican Party treasurer in Kansas. "Especially," he adds helpfully, "if people are eating, and they often are at political rallies."

Not long ago, Brownback would have been an anomaly in Kansas, a state where conservatism and anti-government feeling are often tempered by prairie pragmatism and a strong sense of self-determination. Carroll Kelly, an elderly Shriner (and registered Republican) in western Kansas, illustrated the point when I met him at a small-town parade this fall. "Abortion is a right that the government is trying to take away from people," Kelly said. But then he added, "Now don't get me wrong, I would never let my daughter have one, but if she wanted one, she should be able to." Although the state has not elected a Democratic senator since 1932, Democrats have held the governorship more often than the GOP in the last thirty years. Kansas politics is shaped not only by Bible Belt conservatives but by farm populists and utopian social reformers. And the Kansas legislature has one of the highest percentages of women in the country.

In the 1990s, things changed. Social conservatives mobilized by the Christian Coalition took over the Republican Party in Kansas as they did in more than a dozen other states across the country. When I left in 1990, most state legislators were middle-of-the-road Republicans: sympathetic to business, averse to many environmental regulations, supportive of tort reform, but virtually silent on most social issues, including abortion. Seven years later, the Republican Party is chaired by a former executive director of the Christian Coalition in Kansas, who has also served as political director of Kansans for Life. In the 1994 election, conservatives won a majority in the state House of Representatives as well as the two open United States House seats, sending Brownback and Wichita Representative Tod Tiahrt to Washington.

What caused this takeover? "The Christian conservatives won it fair and square—they went precinct by precinct," says Pete McGill, a Republican lobbyist in Topeka. "Probably the majority of [Kansas] Republicans are pro-choice. The problem is the majority of moderate Republicans are also lazy and don't know how to organize. They like to contribute a few dollars and say, 'Go get 'em tiger.' "

If Kansas voters have been pushed solidly into the social conservative camp, this Senate race will show it. While Brownback represents the ascendance of the new right, Docking is the virtual embodiment of old-style Kansas moderation. Like Kansas Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum, she is a member of one of the state's prominent political families, though Docking's affiliation is by marriage, not birth: both her father-in-law and his father served as governors, and her husband was lieutenant governor in the early 1980s. Like Kassebaum, too, she is business-friendly and fond of bipartisanship: both women support a balanced budget program that would make fewer tax cuts than the Republican plan, and both support abortion rights while opposing federal funding for abortion. "Democrats have to be willing to hold down spending on entitlements, and Republicans have to hold down spending on defense," says Docking. But her main pitch to voters is that she will preserve Kassebaum's centrist approach. "We tilted way to the right in Kansas during the last election," says Docking, a twenty-five-mile-a-week runner whose mom-next-door manner belies her Ivy League background. "It was the first time I've been scared as a Kansan. We need more balance."

While Docking got scared enough to run, the question is: Will moderate Republicans get scared enough to vote for her? And how can she excite their fears when Brownback, in public at least, presents such a reasonable front? At a campaign stop at the Thunderbird Motel restaurant in Concordia, the genial 40-year-old millionaire—Brownback married into the Stauffer family, which owns a Kansas newspaper, along with TV and radio stations—is the first to pick up a platter of cinnamon rolls and offer them around. With his support for campaign finance reform and a ban on congressional gifts, Brownback might be mistaken for a civic-minded businessman just taking a little time off to knock some sense into the public sector. "I support public education. I'm a product of it. I support student loans, but I don't think we need an Education Department in Washington. The federal government spends 7 percent of the money and hands down 50 percent of the regulations," Brownback says, winning laughs and nods from the clientele at the Tasty Pastry in Clay Center.

Until his first congressional race, Brownback was viewed as a middle-of-the-road, business Republican. "I didn't perceive him as an extremist; he didn't even sign up for the Contract with America," says Robert H. Miller, a former speaker of the Kansas House. "It's been my perception that he moved way to the right when he saw that was the way the political winds were blowing."

In the congressional primary in 1994, Kansans for Life even thought Brownback's opposition to abortion seemed a little soft. "I think he was really pro-life in the heart but he was scared to act on it," says Tim Golba, the group's political director. "After the primary he knew he needed our help so he moved to the right a bit." Now, according to Kansans for Life, Brownback can boast of a 100 percent voting record to support strict limits on federal abortion funding; he also voted to end funding for family planning.

Brownback's appeal to both mainstream Republicans and religious conservatives makes him the consummate "bilingual politician" whom social conservatives now try to cultivate, according to political science professor Clyde Wilcox of Georgetown University, who studies the politics of the Christian right. "These are candidates who can talk the talk to religious folks but can also talk to sec-

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ular voters. These kind of candidates do very well, especially if they have held public office and haven't been frightening," says Wilcox.

Still, for Republican voters like Karen Clark, just contemplating Brownback's future voting record is scary enough. Brownback's supporters, she complains, "talk about family values as if they were passed down to Moses along with the Ten Commandments." The disaffection of Republican voters like Clark helps explain recent polls that put Docking and Brownback less than five percentage points apart—a minor miracle for Kansas Democrats who thought that with Dole at the top of the ballot the race was a lost cause. The odds still seem against it, but if the unthinkable happens and a Democrat wins Dole's seat, it will be because moderate Republicans like Clark "just woke up," as she puts it, after the 1994 election: "Suddenly after the last election all these people we had voted for started talking and the rhetoric was so radical, I thought 'my god, what did we do?' They've gone too far."

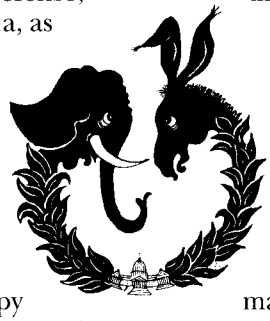
ALISSA RUBIN, who reported for *The Wichita Eagle* from 1985 to 1990, is a senior writer for *Congressional Quarterly*.

RACE FOR THE HOUSE: GEORGIA

WHOSE BISHOP?

By David Grann

It was beat up on bubba hour at the Congressional Black Caucus convention. "Their objectives [are] to get rid of black folks in the political process," cried Representative Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, whose majority-black district was struck down by the Supreme Court. "I'm tired of playing defense," shouted Congressman Cleo Fields of Louisiana, as the crowd chanted "amen." "The bubba I beat," snapped Corrine Brown, whose Florida district was stripped of thousands of its black voters, "couldn't win at the ballot box [so] he took it to the court."



Missing from the meeting was Representative Sanford Bishop, who had skipped it to attend to more important business. Just down the hallway, he stood before a handful of sleepy listeners, pushed up his black-rimmed glasses and droned on about veterans' health benefits. "Because I go back to my district every weekend and am in touch with the needs of my constituents, especially my veterans," said the former civil rights lawyer, whose Georgia district was also snipped and pared, "I know that they want changes in the way their claims are being processed."

The difference was stark. While his peers called for racial struggle, Bishop was looking out for his constituents, black and white. For the most conservative Democrat in the Black Caucus, this is nothing new. As the quietest member of a state delegation stocked with ideologues, like McKinney and Newt Gingrich, Bishop hardly ever makes the papers. But his plodding, reliable ways may prove the winning strategy in the South.

Bishop's race is quietly emerging as a national bellwether, testing just how color-blind American society has become forty years after the civil rights movement and a year after the Supreme Court ended black, gerrymandered districts throughout the South. His struggle also helps answer another fundamental political question this season: Can enough Democrats survive below the Mason-Dixon to create the once unthinkable—Speaker Gephardt—and sweep an unprecedented number of black chairmen into power?

Bishop's Second District has gone from over half African American to 65 percent white; from half urban to predominantly rural. In other words, it now houses its share of bubbas. But, unlike his indignant colleagues, Bishop insists his skin color will not be a factor on November 5. "Cotton, peanuts and soybeans," he declares, "are all more important than my race."

There is evidence he's right. The two-term Democrat, who helped save the peanut program from extinction in the recent farm bill, stunned most observers when he won 59 percent of this year's primary vote against two white opponents. He is now running against a third, former Marine Darrel Ealum. "A Bishop victory would say to the world that the heart of the deep South is laying down the burden of race," says civil rights hero and Georgia Congressman John Lewis, "and finally judging politicians based on what they do."

Perhaps an even greater burden for Bishop to surmount is the rising Republican tide in the land of Margaret Mitchell and moonshine. In 1994, Georgia sent the majority of its Democratic delegation packing; one of the few (and only white) House Democrats who remained, Nathan Deal, switched parties soon after. Under the new, redistricted map, Bishop's district includes as many hostile Republicans as it does devout Democrats. And his opponent is reveling in the shift. Ealum, a Democrat himself until last year, has released a barrage of TV ads showing Bishop next to Ted Kennedy as an announcer intones, "Sanford Bishop: shockingly liberal."

In this atmosphere, Bishop has done the only thing possible: run to the right. Like Bill Clinton, he is embracing conservative issues, from the GOP welfare bill to the defense of marriage act. He may be the last Democrat who still speaks sweetly of Newt Gingrich. And three months ago he joined the Blue Dogs, a coalition of conservative, mostly Southern and, until Bishop came along, pasty white Democrats. "For four years, we've been shaking our heads, wondering when was he going to see what our country really needs," says Kay Read, editor of *The Albany Herald*, the major daily in Bishop's dis-

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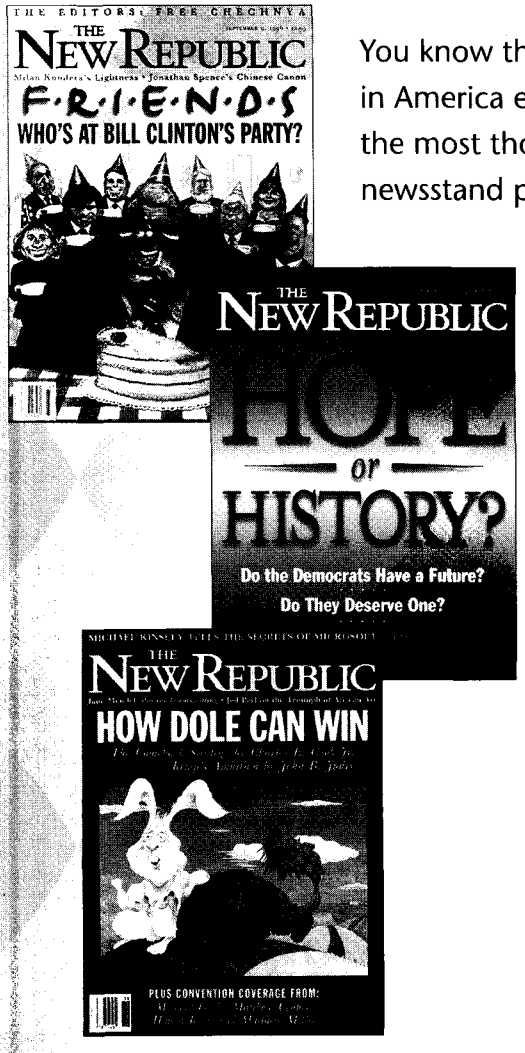

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trict. "Now it's like he's put on different glasses."

To some blacks, Bishop's new vision looks like a betrayal. In downtown Albany, a mother on welfare derides him as an "Uncle Tom." Ronald Walters, a professor of Afro-American studies at the University of Maryland, recognizes Bishop did the "smart thing" by voting for the welfare bill, but says he understands why some blacks would still condemn him as a "race traitor."

But it's not really fair to call Bishop a turncoat. He has always viewed politics through a moderate lens, sometimes to the dismay of his black Democratic colleagues. Even before the court ruling, he represented a significant white population. And the interests of the myriad peanut farmers, black or white, have never been far from his mind.

"I eat catfish and drink beer with a whole lot of rednecks who are going to vote for Bishop just because they've got peanut farms," says Ed Lightsey, former aide to Democratic Representative Charles Hatcher, who Bishop defeated in the 1992 primary after redistricting. "Green is always a more powerful color than black or white. And these are guys who don't think so badly of the KKK."

One day this summer, Sanford Bishop put on his Blue Dog pin, donned a straw hat and paraded through the heart of Dixie. Sandwiched between a car carrying Miss Georgia, a 15-year-old blond belle draped in white lace, and cotton festival floats towed by tractors, Bishop followed the procession into downtown Meigs. There he climbed onto a rickety stage and addressed the few farmers and shopkeepers gathered along the dusty street. "Cotton was once king around here," he declared, as the mike hummed, "and soon it will be king again."

Today, the scene seems wholly unremarkable. But thirty-three years ago it would have been impossible to imagine a black politician rallying white cotton pickers in the South. In 1963, Martin Luther King was imprisoned in nearby Albany for leading some of the bloodiest protests against segregation. Now, Albany's police chief, its school superintendent and four of its six city commissioners are black. "I resent that you even consider race is still an issue in the deep South," says Ealum.

But the legacy of America's tortured racial history lingers. Six months ago, church deacons at the Barnett Creek Baptist Church quietly tried to exhume the body of a baby buried in its graveyard when they discovered she was of mixed race. And local black and white city officials are squabbling over whether to rename a street in the white part of town after Martin Luther King. "Some folks would vote for a dog if it were the same race as they are," says Read. Adds Connie Swindle, an Ealum supporter who workers for WJEP—With Jesus Everything's Possible—radio: "A lot of 'em around here don't forget how it was."

Given the weight of history—a black politician hasn't won a House seat in a majority-white district in Georgia since Reconstruction—many black observers give Bishop little chance. "If Bishop won," says Walters, "it would go against a mountain of evidence compiled by lawyers to draw minority-majority districts in the first place." Which is perhaps why some blacks find little solace in Bishop's crusade.

McKinney, locked in a similar battle for her political survival in a neighboring district, says if she and Bishop win, it will reveal more about the powers of incumbency than about the decline of racism in America. Without black-majority districts, she warns, the price for election may be too high. "If we have black politicians who vote exactly like a white Southern conservative, is that progress?" she asks. "I don't think so." Anita Hodgkiss, who helped defend majority-black districts in the North Carolina case, puts the issue even more starkly. "Even when minority representatives can be elected from districts that are not majority black," she explains, "they cannot be as effective if they find themselves serving two masters."

Bishop, in his typical neutral tone, scoffs at that notion. "If whites can win in majority-black districts and blacks can win in majority-white districts," he says, "it means we are one step closer to the magical moment when race is no longer a campaign issue." And, indeed, that may be the single greatest virtue of the recent Supreme Court rulings. In the newly drawn districts, there cannot be "white" and "black" politics. Just as Bishop must reach out to whites in the north side of Albany, freshman Republican Saxby Chambliss must now reach out to blacks in Macon County.

After the cotton festival, Bishop pumps hands, passes out pins and parrots his campaign themes. Meanwhile, Ealum is in the peanut gallery a few feet away: "Sanford Bishop is a liberal urbanite," he squawks as an ABC camera scans for footage for an upcoming show on race relations in America.

When the hoopla has faded, Bishop pauses in front of Maria's Bar & Grill, staring at the windowless slabs of brown wood, the nails protruding from the peeling shingles. It is the only venue he hasn't visited. "What do you think?" he asks his district director. "Redneck bar," the director replies.

After a long pause, Bishop straightens his glasses and pulls open the door. The room is dark, and it takes a minute to realize that Bishop is the only black person inside.

"What's your name?" somebody asks.

"Bishop," says Bishop.

"He's the guy on television," the bartender says. After a minute, a woman, slightly tipsy, asks, "You want to be our congressman, eh?"

"I am your congressman," he says. A pool ball cracks in the back of the hall. "My husband served over in Fort Benning," she says. "The people in Washington keep trying to cut his benefits."

"Well, I'm on the Veterans' Affairs Committee," says Bishop, extending his hand with a smile. "If you need anything, call me."

DAVID GRANN is executive editor of *The Hill*.

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QUOTEMEISTERS

By Franklin Foer

In his prime, Duke University political scientist James David Barber was a darling of the dailies. During the '70s and early '80s, he was the man top reporters turned to for an authoritative opinion about the political issue of the moment. Barber quotes showed up regularly in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. But behind the scenes, the way former *Post* reporters tell it, Barber worked hard at cultivating relationships with journalists. He organized seminars in North Carolina exclusively for *Post* reporters, who regarded their trips down South as paid vacation. And when Barber came up to Washington, he made it a point to visit the *Post* newsroom, where he roamed the National desk, schmoozing with the élan of a seasoned politician. Despite his folksy, avuncular manner, he was deliberate and media savvy—the original quotemeister.

Now retired and out of fashion, Barber has been surpassed by a new generation of academic pundits. And they don't need to exert nearly as much effort to get their names in print. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, and Larry Sabato, a political scientist from the University of Virginia, are two leading practitioners of the new academic punditry. Like Norm Ornstein, Bill Schneider and other ex-academics who live off the fat of think tanks, Sabato and Jamieson are treated as political know-it-alls by the press. Reporters rely on them to dish out opinions on every political issue imaginable, regardless of their actual expertise. Their academic credentials lend instant authority to even the silliest or most obvious of points.

A sampling of Sabato's appearances in the Lexis-Nexis database of big-city papers, national magazines and wire services last month is breathtaking. His ambit includes Perot's exclusion from the debates, Clinton's policy toward Iraq, Whitewater, Dole's attitude toward pot-smoking, Dick Morris, negative ads, the continued relevance of political parties. He appeared eighty-one times in September alone, more than any other think tank denizen or academic pundit, Ornstein included; only Jamieson's sixty-five citations come close.

A homey man with a thick Virginia twang, Larry Sabato abhors the thought of abandoning life in Charlottesville for the Washington scene. "The University of Virginia has given me all my opportunities; besides, I cannot stand the thought of having to deal with all that city traffic," he tells me. Sabato talks with the enthusiasm of a local boy made good—he got his start as an analyst of Virginia politics—and admits to taking immense pleasure in talking to the press. Every day he sets aside an hour to field calls from reporters. Jamieson, on the other hand, cut her teeth on Aristotle and Cicero, earning a Ph.D. in Rhetoric for a dissertation she wrote on the papacy. She pontificates with Periclean authority and has the poise of a Fortune 500 executive. If Sabato's style is reminiscent of James Carville minus some of the Ragin' Cajun's frenetic edge, Jamieson is the Mary Matalin of academic pundits—polished but fun.

Jamieson and Sabato are certainly media friendly. But there's more to their ascendancy than the ease with which they serve up soundbites or recite relevant studies. The rise of academic punditry can be traced to changes within journalism itself. Back in the '70s, reporters enamored of the New Journalism started questioning the old sacrosanct rule of their trade—objectivity. A classic anecdote comes from Timothy Crouse's *The Boys on the Bus*. Crouse describes a tortured Jules Witcover, brooding over the intransigence of his editors at *The Los Angeles Times* who killed his stories, arguing they were riddled with interpretation and analysis. The ace reporter and his editors kept butting heads over Witcover's subjective approach, until his editors came up with an ingenious solution: find other people who will say what you want to say and quote them. Expert quotes could cloak analysis in objective garb. Sensing that this was a dishonest way of doing business, Witcover split for *The Washington Post*. At more enlightened papers like the *Post*, news analysis was already supplementing and even supplanting straight narrative reporting. But for papers that were still uncritically wedded to a just-the-facts-ma'am style the solution proposed by Witcover's editors proved irresistible.

Changes in the demographics of journalism contributed to the new vogue in academic punditry, as well. In the post-Watergate era, reporting acquired a social prestige that increasingly attracted Ivy League graduates and journalism postgrads. By the '80s, the mythic high-school dropout who rose from the mailroom to the newsroom had become a complete anomaly. The new hypereducated reporters were more apt to turn to academics for input.

Also, as Crouse's book about the 1972 campaign illustrates, the press itself became a press story. Newspapers began working themselves into what is by now a self-referential frenzy. In the '80s, they hired ombudsmen and media critics, like the *Post*'s Howard Kurtz and *The Los Angeles Times*'s David Shaw, to write articles scrutinizing their own operations and taking themselves to task for botched stories. Coverage of the 1988 presidential election occasioned a lot of this breast-beating. Editors circulated fretful memos, blaming themselves for

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uncritically reporting on Bush's negative attacks and helping Willie Horton to sink Mike Dukakis. To correct their mistakes, or at least assuage their guilt, newspapers innovated: "ad-watch" columns, analyses of campaign spots pointing out stretches of the truth, started appearing in newspapers such as the *Post* and *The Boston Globe* (Jamieson spearheaded the movement, calling reporters personally to pressure them to write ad-watch pieces). Academic punditry has been a major beneficiary of this journalistic self-criticism. The hope is that academics will provide the probing analysis and substantive research that reporters don't have the time or wherewithal to obtain on their own. Sabato and Jamieson, who both published books critiquing the press on the cusp of this introspective moment, were nicely positioned to profit from this turn in reporting.

Academics have their own reasons for gabbing. Sabato and Jamieson both claim that it's all just part of their job. They are, after all, both students of the media. Like plants from a subversive organization, they can study their subject by actively collaborating with it. But there is also an economics of punditry. In think tanks, many fellows, Ornstein included, have pretty much ditched the idea of original research. Now they are primarily PR machines, boosting the name recognition of their think tank and thus its fund-raising. Things aren't so different in the academy, where university PR officers actively encourage faculty to talk to reporters and produce glossy compendia of experts for talk-show bookers to peruse.

Larry Sabato argues that it comes down to name recognition: "I spend as much [time] talking to the press as I do getting muckety-mucks to return my phone calls when I am doing my research. If you're unknown you don't have a shot at getting interviews. Academics are dead last on everybody's lists." The pundit circuit also helps to promote books, he concedes, and the media exposure may help untenured professors get permanent posts.

More often than they ought to be, though, quotes from academics are simply vacuous. Sabato, for example, described the principle of negative campaigning to *Newsweek*: "A negative hit is worth four or five times more than a positive one" (there was no additional analysis). And he told *The Indianapolis Star* last month that "There are no more good guys in politics." That really clears things up. Jamieson concedes that, when you talk as much as she does, you're bound to say some dumb things or stray too far from your expertise: "The test should be whether the statements reflect the academic's expertise. I don't take about 30 percent of my calls, because they're about subjects where I am not an expert. Unfortunately, many times reporters call, knowing what they want to get you to say. They want a sentence-long quote, which isn't that hard to extract."

Quotes from academic pundits lend gravitas to common sense observations and ideas that reporters ought to be able to express themselves. They're used as building blocks in an argument, rarely presented in dialogue with other experts' comments and seldom challenged in the same article in which they appear.

The overuse and misuse of academic experts has undermined their potentially important contributions to political journalism. Both Jamieson and Sabato have cutting—if not necessarily original—criticisms of American politics. Jamieson argues that the campaign consultants and the media have focused our attention on the "horse race" aspects of politics; discussions of strategy trump substantive considerations. Two years ago she gained all sorts of attention with a study of major papers' coverage of 1994 health care debates. She bemoaned her finding that two-thirds of the reporting focused on "score-keeping"—will it pass? how to pass it?—while only one-third dealt with virtues and defects of the policy itself. And Sabato has been a vociferous critic of the soundbite, of campaign consultants and of journalistic scandal-mongering.

Yet, when they're interviewed in the press, Sabato and Jamieson end up dispensing precisely the sorts of shallow and almost exclusively tactical commentary they have elsewhere criticized. Analyzing the buildup to the Republican convention this summer, Jamieson explained to *The Dallas Morning News* that Dole needs to fine-tune his message to expand his base, "When you're behind in the polls, you need to do more than reinforce." And she told *The Los Angeles Times*, "If it looks like [Dole is] trafficking his disability for self-serving ends, it won't work." These may be legitimate points, but they are precisely the kind of "strategic concerns" that Jamieson has made a career of condemning. Sabato, too, often gives journalists simplistic analyses of the type he claims to deplore. He offered the following piece of intelligence to a reporter at *The Kansas City Star*: "Every winning presidential candidate has had one heck of a lot of good luck and so far Dole hasn't had much."

Sabato and Jamieson have produced some impressive scholarship, rendered in readable prose and supported by extensive research. They possess expertise that can illuminate. So why do they so rarely illuminate in the press? It's true they're spread too thin, but much of the fault lies with political journalists. A quote from a pundit shows a journalist has at least made a phone call, which counts as reporting if your standards aren't too exacting. *The Washington Post*'s E.J. Dionne suggests that reporters ought to rethink their use of academic pundits. He argues that "A more appropriate model for the relationship between political scientists and political journalists is the relationship between business section reporters and economists." This makes sense. Economists are mainly relied upon in the press to make predictions and explain trends that they have been uniquely trained to make and explain—not observations that any lay person could come up with without much thought. And if that approach means we hear less from Sabato and Jamieson, well, maybe they're better off writing books, anyway.

FRANKLIN FOER is on the staff of *Slate*.

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LABOR PAINS

By Michael Lewis

October 13:

I'd barely heard of J.D. Hayworth before I showed up in Phoenix. But once I got there I found the freshman Republican congressman and his campaign troubles all over the local papers. Some toxic combination of hostile women voters and negative television ads looked like it might well cost J.D. his seat. J.D. was the victim of a gender gap, which in plain English means that men like him but women don't.

As a congressman J.D. has a tendency to cause trouble. He's gotten so good at heckling Democrats from the front row of the House Chamber that Representative David Obey finally described him in the Congressional Record as "one of the most impolite Members I have ever seen in my service in this House." Just a few months into his tenure J.D. nearly came to blows with Representative Steny Hoyer after he handed around a flier that said things like "Hoyer = sex training for federal employees" and "Hoyer = illegal drug use" and "Hoyer = New Age cult training." And of course when J.D. himself rises to speak on the House floor ... well ... he doesn't tread lightly. "The new Republican majority is a slam-dunk on the liberal establishment and the bloated federal bureaucracy," he said, in a typical specimen of his oratory. "President Clinton's administration is an air ball. Every time he tries to show leadership, he is throwing up a brick."

By the time I arrive at J.D.'s campaign headquarters on the ground floor of a State Farm Insurance office the man in the flesh is waiting for me. He comes breaking through a hedge in a powder blue sleeveless shirt and baggy blue jeans; "It's my Don Ho look," he bellows. His big broad face is fire-engine red from campaigning outdoors; a few hours in the Arizona sun, says J.D., and "I'm quick-fried to a crackly crunch." There are three other things immediately apparent about J.D., each in its own way relevant to his current predicament: a) he slaps backs like no one you've ever seen; b) his natural speaking voice is exactly like Rush Limbaugh's shouting voice; and c) he weighs about 500 pounds. J.D. was recruited to be a lineman at North Carolina State, but injuries after his freshman year ended his career. "I started out at right tackle and ended up left out," he says. After college he took a job as a sportscaster. Before he ran for Congress in 1994 he'd spent ten years with the CBS affiliate in Phoenix.

Together with J.D.'s wife and child we pile into his sports utility vehicle and head out for an Indian powwow down the highway in Mesa. J.D. explains that the Indians in Arizona refer to themselves as Indians rather than as Native Americans, and we agree that this is somehow decent of them. But once we're on the road the conversation drifts quickly to the unusual campaign being waged against him by organized labor. "I am the target of the single most intensive political ad campaign in Arizona political history," J.D. booms from the front seat. And it's true! J.D. has landed on the AFL-CIO's hit list. The union has set aside $35 million to buy TV and radio ads; $2 million of that is being spent on J.D. alone. J.D. calls it "carpet bombing" and says he is the main target because "Boss Sweeney" fears his potential as a future national leader. That he won only 54 percent of the vote in 1994 probably also had something to do with it. Whatever. "We didn't even know we were on the attack list," hollers J.D., as he recalls the initial salvo. He was sitting with his 6-year-old daughter in front of his television one day and ... *boom*! "It just cut her to the core," says J.D. "'What are they saying about Daddy?' she said.... These ads just started coming out all over the place. J.D. wants to starve kids! J.D. wants to toss grannies out on the streets! They started with the Medicare lies...."

The Medicare ads run by the AFL-CIO actually are worth describing. They open with a picture of an elderly woman, which quickly fades to another of Newt Gingrich, who says, "Now we don't get rid of it in round one because we don't think that's politically smart and we don't think that's the right way to go through the transition. But we believe it's going to wither on the vine." Then a voice announces: "Last year Congressman J.D. Hayworth voted with Newt Gingrich to cut Medicare and give new tax breaks to the wealthy." Fade back to the elderly woman and the haunting voice: "Wither on the vine," it says.

In keeping with all the AFL-CIO ads it doesn't tell you who to vote for. It presents this version of events purely as information. That the information is highly misleading—Gingrich wasn't talking about the entire Medicare program but only a small portion of it—hardly matters

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at this late date. Voters are eating it up, women voters, especially. J.D.'s gender gap makes Dole look like a ladies' man.

Now as it happens before I met J.D. I spent some time with a pair of female pollsters who specialize in the women's vote. I had to talk to two of them because pollsters classify themselves as Democrat and Republican, which tells you something about the science of polling. At any rate, both Celinda Lake (D) and Kellyanne Fitzpatrick (R) seem to know a lot about women voters, and they more or less agree that it is slightly but not entirely silly to talk about the women's vote as a homogeneous force. They agree that women more than men dislike anything that sounds radical or dramatic and thus look more favorably on federal safety nets. They also agree that women have a special distaste for risky packages or risky-sounding language. If you want women to open your direct mail, for instance, you do better to use envelopes warmly colored in teals and purples than in red, white and blue. And if you want to speak to women, Republican pollster Fitzpatrick says, avoid using words like "revolution" and "radical" and "extreme" and "grotesque." Use words like "reform" and "un-American" and "compromise." Above all, you should avoid sports metaphors.

None of this, so far as I can see, augers well for J.D.

We arrive at the powwow to find many Indians done up in fantastic costumes. On the horizon a couple of dozen older men chant and dance. A childhood of Westerns has left me with the instinct to flee whenever I hear Indians chanting. But J.D. plunges on in. "I gotta check this out," he shouts, and grabs for a fat roll of campaign stickers in the back seat. Not two minutes later he's found an Indian child curious enough to sit still. "Sweety," he says, sweetly, "you want to get stickerized?" Then he looks up at me. "Joel Achenbach of *The Washington Post* wrote an article that said I was the most congenial of the Republican freshmen." I make a note to call Joel and ask him about this.

October 14:

I arrive in Anaheim to find a couple of thousand members of the California State Employees Union in a ballroom around the corner from Disneyland waiting for John Sweeney. Sweeney's people saw him to the airport in Washington, and yet in the airport in Los Angeles Sweeney is nowhere to be found. Everyone is in a tizzy, and for an hour or so it looks as if I have walked into the biggest story since Jimmy Hoffa vanished. Before I can write it, Sweeney wanders in, unescorted. It may be possible to look less dangerous, but I'm not sure how. The round crimson face framed by white tufts of Santa Claus hair calls to mind the kindly general store owner in every Western who is required to throw his hands in the air and possibly be shot while the bad guys ransack the town. He exists merely to heighten our pleasure when the good guys turn up and justice is finally done.

The speech Sweeney gives is entirely in keeping with his appearance: mild is too strong a word. As he reads from his prepared text 2,000 union members remove their spectacles and rub their eyes, and I am increasingly incredulous: *This* is the guy who's destroying J.D. Hayworth? The only part of Sweeney's written speech that he fails to read verbatim is its single rabble-rousing passage. Here is what Sweeney was supposed to say:

"*Will you stand with me and [various other labor leaders] as we take California and our country back? Will you stand with us? Will you? Will you? . . . What a rush! A standing ovation, and I haven't even gotten started yet!*"

Here is what Sweeney said:

"*Will you stand with me and [various other labor leaders] as we take California and our country back?*"

Silence. Polite clapping. End of rabble-rousing.

What's strange about his lack of passion is that Sweeney is dealing with great subjects, such as economic inequality and social injustice, that normally arouse the highest human passions. But whatever Sweeney feels down deep comes across as a kind of patient, tolerant disapproval. I'd always thought of labor leaders as He-Men, just as I'd always thought of Republican congressmen as ethereal wimps who couldn't cut it in business. Maybe I had it all backwards.

At the airport, Sweeney declines my offer to help with his two large bags; then, when we check in, he actually drags my own little bag along for me. On the airplane he offers to switch seats so that we can sit together. Once we are settled in he orders a glass of red wine, and I start asking him the kind of questions that from Pat Buchanan would elicit a soliloquy on the dignity of the American working man. In response I get answers filled with words like "compromise," "reform" and "long-term." I try to find out why the $35 million in ads address issues like Medicare that are not strictly union issues, rather than issues like striker replacement that are. The answer is so mild and pleasant it's unprintable. The closest Sweeney comes to high feeling and sharp rhetoric is immediately after his second glass of red wine, when I get him talking about the recent classification of Federal Express as a railway, which exempts it from a lot of labor laws. He says influential guys like George Mitchell sit on the FedEx board and "have access to the purple planes—the private jets. It shows how deeply all of this runs."

At one point I tell him that he isn't what I expected, that I never thought the man who caused and won the first contested election at the AFL-CIO would be so soft and cuddly and . . . nice. This causes him to bristle, I think. "That's my style, and it has served me very well," he says, before we head out to a local union social. The carpenters of Oakland are hosting a Monday Night Football bash. A real working guy sort of thing, you might think. Only it isn't. The working men and women of the Bay Area sit at long tables stuffing political propaganda into envelopes and listening to gentle political speeches, while the game between the San Francisco 49ers and the Green Bay Packers flickers unwatched on a big-screen TV. Somewhere in America, politics is suddenly more important than football. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

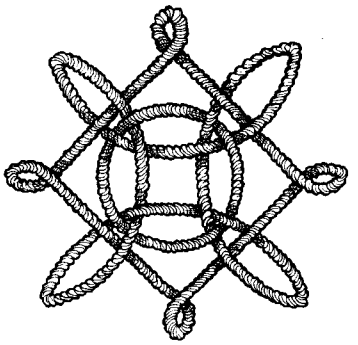
Lost city

There is a joke making the rounds this election. President Clinton approaches a voter with outstretched arms. After pumping the guy's hand, the president asks for his vote. "Why should I support you?" asks the voter. "Well, because I've created millions of new jobs on my watch," the president answers. "Yeah, and I've got *three* of them," the rueful voter shoots back. The joke speaks to the undercurrent of anxiety seething beneath the sunny statistics on low unemployment. This economy is generating low-pay, service sector jobs with few prospects for long-term security, reliable benefits or opportunities to hone crucial career skills.

Work has always been central to American identity. The "huddled masses," including my own grandparents, came here in search of the dignity of labor and the recognition and standing that hard, dependable work ought, by rights, to afford. They dreamt about owning a bit of land or, even more improbably, a home; of improving their lives and the lives of their children; of passing something on to their grandchildren. No more. Now you're a sucker if you believe these things, or so those calling the economic shots are, in effect, telling people, and *showing* them in the crassest of ways. What is rewarded now is maximum flexibility, which means, in practice, no particular commitment to a job, a skill or a place. Welcome to the brave new world of the global economy.

At one point, not that long ago, people who attained higher learning could look forward to careers—vocations, an earlier generation would have called them—commensurate with their education and abilities. This was always, in part, a prerogative of the middle class. But that class kept growing, incorporating many who had begun life in modest circumstances. As it grew, this professional middle tier was forced to become more inclusive as a result of concrete political struggles. Working-class Americans struck their own kind of deal through union organization and collective bargaining arrangements. Job security helped families remain stable, communities grow, folks make sense of themselves in relation to work and the wider polity.

But an emerging body of analysis not only shows the ways in which this world is imploding, it demonstrates how profoundly dislocated the human beings affected come to feel. In a study now underway, the distinguished sociologist Richard Sennett is examining what happens to people cut adrift from perduring work and, therefore, from long-term expectations. Without work as a stable frame of reference, given de-skilling, outsourcing and down-sizing, workers face the prospect of changing jobs some eleven times over the course of a life (as a matter not of choice and upward mobility, but of harsh necessity), and men and women come to see themselves as *dispensable*, in Sennett's distressing language. The old mobility, available to those who could see their work lives in terms of a "career path," is being replaced by a new dislocability. This fuels a corrosive sense of uselessness. It also means that the middle class is shrinking; an underclass is growing; and a smaller, but substantial, overclass of the very successful—those with incomes in constant dollars of over $100,000—has quadrupled since 1950. The shrinking of the middle class is particularly worrisome for those concerned with the fate of democracy, for it is the class that has historically been the backbone of liberal democratic regimes.



At earlier points in our history we had other sources of meaning and purpose. In his beautiful book about Chicago in the years following World War II, *The Lost City*, Alan Ehrenhalt describes a densely textured world of religion, ethnicity, neighborhood, family. As that world was abandoned or disintegrated, work—"the job"—and what it could buy and sustain rose in importance. And now that expectation is harder to meet. What was lost cannot be restored and the promise of what would replace it has been depleted. It is as if a tacit social contract has been broken, yet there is no one to blame, no way to think about this politically. Ghostly corporations that operate outside the purview not only of particular communities but increasingly of the nation-state cannot be held accountable.

In the meantime, sunny publicists for the new order, managerial boosters who prate about the glories of contingency like post-moderns gone daft, unabashedly describe their view of the future as one in which the *entire* work force is replaceable, effaceable, utterly "contingent." These hawkers of new economic realities celebrate doing "more with less," and the "less" are those human beings destined for the vocational scrapheap. Most starkly, Sennett is finding that self-worth founded "on the conviction that one's experience is more than a series of random events" either cannot emerge in the new economic order or comes under terrific pressure to succumb.

The implications for civic life are dire. The qualities of mind and habits of the heart that democracy relies on—loyalty, reciprocity, trust, self-discipline—dry up under the harsh lights of shapeless, evanescent, half or part-time or multi-flex-time work.

Of course, there are those who thrive under the new regime—namely the emergent technocratic elite. But increasingly low-tech work is being "out-sourced" and high-tech work is being automated. What's left? Partial, service sector, temp-work. Man Power, Inc., a temp-agency, is now the largest single private employer in the United States: temp-work; dispensable self. We haven't begun to plumb the depths of these changes and their long-term implications for Americans as citizens, parents and workers. But a story stripped of long-term reference points, including the dignity and recognition conferred by work, is ripe for other sorts of stories, and they may not be democratic ones.

As Thomas Hobbes, among others, taught us: fear, should it become the overriding passion, breeds authoritarian solutions. Hobbes, of course, believed that, human passions being what they were, a Leviathan would be needed to forestall descent into the war of all against all. Hobbes overdramatized, surely. But if you try to peer through the dislocating and far-reaching changes of the present, if you shut out the beckoning siren calls of the new elite and their various mouthpieces, it may well be the mordant voice of Hobbes rather than the buoyant tones of democratic thinkers that you recognize blaring at the far end of the line. As economic disparity grows, lines of connection between classes attenuate. An expanding middle class no longer serves as an intermediary between the elites and those left out, the permanent losers. This development could easily fuel antidemocratic movements—nativist populism, brittle nationalism, an expanding security state. Does this seem apocalyptic? Perhaps. But it is better than syrupy evasion, the pre-packaged Pablum of the techno-managerial boosters.

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Assorted Hungers

Writing recently in *The New York Times* of Louis Farrakhan and his "sidekick" Benjamin Chavis, Bob Herbert said: "If you want a glimpse of something positive happening in the lives of black people, a good rule of thumb is to go where Mr. Farrakhan and Mr. Chavis aren't." Spike Lee disagrees. This most talented of African American filmmakers decided to investigate the attractions of Farrakhan's so-called Million Man March last year, and the result is **Get on the Bus** (Columbia). It's a puzzler.

In October 1995, fifteen black men get on a chartered bus in Los Angeles to cross the country to the march in Washington. Farrakhan's name is not one that some of us—white and black—can hear without gritting our teeth, but Lee and his writer, Reggie Rock Bythewood, implicitly promise us insight. The conversation and argument in the first half of the film convey one fundamental view: for many black people—black *men*, I should underscore—it's better to have a galvanizing, aggressive, challenging leader, whatever his faults, than to have no such figure at all.

The men on the bus are of course a mixed lot. (And even before the trip starts, we hear the anger of one young black woman because only men have been invited to the march.) The passengers include: an old man stripped of almost everything, a pushy young actor, a pair of gay lovers, an LAPD cop, an ex-member of an L.A. gang, and a father literally shackled to his teenage son by court order to keep the boy under control. They and others make the conversational cauldron simmer.

The trip begins with two black drivers. Not far along, there's an accident, and a replacement bus arrives with a different assistant driver, a Jewish white man. This "accident" device allows for some white Jewish opinions until this man quits in disgust.

Despite the worn metaphor of a vehicle as a contained world, Lee's skill, his actors' energy and the volatile dialogue hold us. It would be silly to expect ideas about Farrakhan that all of us agree with, but the views of these men, in banter and brag, are forcefully put. However, about halfway through the picture, validity melts, and movie-itis sets in.

The one thing we have hoped would not happen, even if we weren't quite aware of the hope, happens: a fistfight between two of the passengers. Worse: smack against all the talk of incipient brotherhood, to be furthered by this trip and the march, all the passengers pile out and circle the antagonists to encourage them. All of this is handled without irony. Then there's a clumsily sentimental incident between the shackled father and son. And then there's an incident with the old man, cornily contrived, to keep some of the passengers from ever getting to Washington. We get only a few glimpses of the march.

So the long trip is never fulfilled, with or in the march itself. Instead, the film ends with an oration from the black bus driver about the needs and incentives of black men, a speech whose language and ideas have no precedent in the character. It's mere vacuous rhetoric. Surely Lee knew he was moving from the realism of the first half into empty verbiage. Possibly he hoped that he could lift his film from the veristic to the symbolic; but this transmutation doesn't happen. The picture runs out of steam and settles for wind.

Still, Lee's directing talent is clear: he converts that bus interior into a theater with economy and force. Noteworthy in the cast are Charles Dutton as the driver, Ossie Davis as the old man and André Braugher as the actor. They and others make the derailment of the film all the more regrettable.

Alan Miller is an experienced musician—he has conducted several symphony orchestras around the country—who turned some years ago to making films, mostly about music. He did *From Mao to Mozart—Isaac Stern in China*, an enlightenment, and the flavorful *High Fidelity—The Adventures of the Guarneri String Quartet*. Now Miller gives us another treasure: **Small Wonder** (Miramax), about the work of Roberta Guaspari-Tzavaras.

Roberta, as she is called throughout the film, is a woman around 50 who teaches violin in New York City elementary schools. When the Board of Education scrubbed her job through budget cuts in 1990, she organized a non-profit organization to fund a violin program in three East Harlem schools. She has about 150 students in those schools. Violins, from half-size to full-size, are provided: Roberta supplies the rest. More truthfully, she gets the students to supply the rest.

She is a strong, clear, no-nonsense, demanding and effective teacher. These

FILMS WORTH SEEING

American Buffalo. *David Mamet's mythic play—about the entropy of the world in a junk shop—almost fulfilled by Dustin Hoffman and Dennis Franz. (Reviewed 9/16 & 23/96)* **The Line King.** *A documentary about the fabulous Al Hirschfeld, exhilarating, informative, delightful. (10/21/96)* **Looking for Richard.** *Al Pacino, a theater Richard III, explores the play with some friends and honored guests. Free-wheeling, fun, insightful. (9/30/96)* **Secrets & Lies.** *Mike Leigh, an exceptionally delving director, plumbs characters with some fine actors in this London domestic drama involving race. (9/30/96)*—**SK**

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boys and girls, of every available ethnic source in Manhattan, compete to get into her classes. They skip social events and athletic events to practice, to attend. They care. Roberta is a musician, not a gymnast of the fiddle. (One sequence shows her playing a trio at home with her two grown sons.) But she is not primarily interested in turning out professional musicians. She is naturally keen about the nurturing power of music on the minds and sensibilities of the students. But her chief concern is to give these students some experience of success, of having achieved something for themselves.

We see beginners beginning, middle students progressing, older ones in control. Mixed in with these unbelievably moving classes—just classes, no tear-jerking—we get glimpses of the home lives of some of these children. (Especially an imp named José.) Isaac Stern, possibly through Allan Miller's invitation, visits one of the classes. The climax of the film is a benefit concert at Carnegie Hall, before a completely packed house, a performance of a Bach concerto with the older students as ensemble, with Isaac Stern, Itzhak Perlman, Midori and Arnold Steinhardt (of the Guarneri quintet) as soloists. It's thrilling.

In Irving Howe's invaluable book on Thomas Hardy, he says of *Jude the Obscure*: "This last of Hardy's novels cannot be fully apprehended if read as a conventional realistic work.... Committed to an extreme darkness of view, a promethean resistance to fatality, *Jude the Obscure* shares in the spirit of the Book of Job...." **Jude** (Gramercy) doesn't even make it as a conventionally realistic work, let alone a large-scale dark one. Hossein Amini's screenplay doesn't come close to what we can call the David Lean standard: an adaptation authentically trying to fulfill a novel's intent through filmic means.

That's not all. This story of a stonemason in late nineteenth-century England, who wants to rise in the world but whose entanglements with women impede him, is not a diatribe against female cunning: it's an agon of the body and the spirit. Thus it needs an agonist. Christopher Eccleston, who plays Jude, is pretty close to a nullity. Far from being a kind of proletarian Prometheus bound by coils of mortality, it's hard to believe that this Jude's binding is not mechanically contrived, that the two women of the story really want him.

Oddly enough, these two women are in fact very well played. Rachel Griffiths, as the pig farmer's daughter Arabella, has exactly the right edge of awakened wildness. Kate Winslet, so engaging as the younger sister in *Sense and Sensibility*, is kaleidoscopically variable as Jude's cousin Sue. Michael Winterbottom's directing is serviceable. But the dimensions of the piece are so shrunken and the center of it so bland that Hardy's original title takes on another meaning. •

The unedifying realities of the other pro-life, pro-choice debate.

Freedom's Smoke

By Malcolm Gladwell

I.

On August 12, in the second week of the worst month in the history of the American tobacco industry, a six-man jury in Jacksonville, Florida found that the cigarettes made by the country's third largest tobacco company were "unreasonably dangerous and defective" and awarded a 65-year-old ex-smoker with lung cancer $750,000 in damages. Only once before had the tobacco industry lost a lawsuit—the Cippolone case in 1988—but that was a weak decision, easily overturned on appeal. This was the real thing, and on Wall Street tobacco stocks fell by almost 15 percent.

Twelve days later, the Food and Drug Administration announced that it intended, for the first time, to regulate the nicotine in cigarettes as a drug. Vending machines, under the proposal, would be all but banned. Tobacco billboard advertisements would be reduced to black-and-white "tombstone" ads. Tobacco advertising in magazines appealing to youth would be outlawed, as would brand-name sponsorship of sporting events. And less than a week later, a third and final blow was struck. Speaking before a nationally televised audience at the Democratic National Convention, Al Gore gave a dramatic account of his sister's death from lung cancer twelve years ago, after a lifetime of smoking. "Three thousand young people in America will start smoking tomorrow. One thousand of them will die a death not unlike my sister's," Gore said, bringing the full weight of the White House against the tobacco industry. "And that is why until I draw my last breath, I will pour my heart and soul into the cause of protecting our children from the dangers of smoking."

The Runaway Jury
by John Grisham
(Doubleday, 401 pp., $26.95)

Smokescreen: The Truth Behind the Tobacco Industry Cover-up
by Philip J. Hilts
(Addison Wesley, 253 pp., $22)

Ashes to Ashes: America's Hundred-Year Cigarette War, the Public Health, and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris
by Richard Kluger
(Knopf, 807 pp., $35)

The tobacco industry has been under fire for some time, of course. Over the past thirty years, the steady accumulation of medical evidence on the dangers of smoking and the mounting political victories of the anti-smoking movement have undercut the economic, political and cultural status that cigarettes and the cigarette industry enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s. But there is a difference between an orderly retreat, in which the industry can limit its losses and retrench, and what happened to the industry in August, which looks rather like the beginning of a rout.

It is a fact of no small significance, moreover, that as juries, politicians and regulators were descending on the tobacco industry this summer, the top-selling novel in the land was *The Runaway Jury* by John Grisham. In his previous novels, Grisham had made villains of mafiosi, Klansmen, drug dealers and large-scale political conspirators. In his new book, however, he chose for his

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malefactors four middle-aged tobacco executives; and such is the shift in public opinion that this group of suits who, not long ago, could no more have carried a thriller than a band of grocery clerks can now serve as a perfectly plausible source of suspense, as riveting embodiments of evil.

At the beginning of the novel, when the executives gather in a small Gulf Coast town to talk strategy about an upcoming liability trial, Grisham introduces them without elaboration, in the confidence that even the most mundane details about tobacco executives have today become creepy and portentous. "Another assistant ventured forth with a platter of leftover shrimp and oysters, but Fitch waved him off," Grisham writes, of one of the tobacco honchos. "There was a rumor that he sometimes ate, but he'd never been caught in the process. The evidence was there, the thick chest and ample waistline, the fleshy roll under the goatee, the general squattiness of his frame. But he wore dark suits and kept his jackets buttoned, and did a fine job of carrying his bulk with importance." Time was when only Ernst Stavro Blofeld or KGB agents or foreign dictators waved away plates of oysters and hid their fleshy bulk in dark suits. But this is 1996, and the business of tobacco has tipped from dubious to despicable. As one juror said after the verdict in the Jacksonville case, "It's hard for me to understand why this hasn't happened before." Of course it is. How could these monsters ever have seemed like mere businessmen?

There is much to cheer about in this new assault on the tobacco industry. But the problem with routs is that, in the mad, exultant pursuit of an enemy, rash decisions are made and important distinctions are blurred. The day after the vice president's tearful speech at the convention, for example, it was revealed that, for a number of years after his sister died of lung cancer, he was still accepting money from tobacco interests and that he and his family were still growing tobacco on their farms in Tennessee. Gore's explanation was that his sister's death created a "numbness" that made it difficult for him to translate the lessons of her death into public policy. But even if we grant that explanation—and it resembles nothing so much as a political version of the Twinkie Defense—it does not change the fact that Gore somehow found it permissible to denounce an entire industry without once mentioning his own part in it.

This is the kind of intemperance and righteousness that lies beneath the surface of the tobacco rout, an intemperance found again and again in the rhetoric of the anti-smoking movement and, most particularly, in *Smokescreen*, a new book by Philip Hilts. Hilts is a medical writer for *The New York Times*, and *Smokescreen* is a history of the tobacco industry's attempt to hide its knowledge of the dangers of smoking from the public. In the book's final chapter, Hilts sets out to provide an explanation for the conduct of tobacco executives, and he does so by referring to *The Nazi Doctors*, Robert Jay Lifton's study of the psychology of those who ran the concentration camps.

> When [industry executives] come to the final question, "How can we be doing this?" there is an answer: Well, people are going to smoke, and there is no reason why they shouldn't choose it if they want to. What's better? Giving people their small risky pleasures, or prohibition and a civil war over morals?
>
> The guards and doctors in the Nazi death camps had similar rituals in which they would talk to one another, and ask how could they be doing what they were doing. They had an answer as well. Whenever a new doctor would arrive at Auschwitz, Lifton writes, "the process was repeated as the newcomer's questions were answered by his more experienced drinking companions. He would ask, 'How can these things be done here?' Then there was something like a general answer ... which clarified everything. 'What is better for [the prisoner]—whether he croaks in shit or goes to heaven in a cloud of gas?' And that settled the whole matter for the initiates."

What is grotesque about this passage is not just the casualness with which Hilts enlists the Holocaust in his campaign against the Marlboro Man; Auschwitz, after all, has been cheapened before. It is also the incredible moral and analytical simplification, the obliteration of notions of responsibility, that is required to compare the act of selling people cigarettes to the act of herding people into a gas chamber. At the moment of its greatest victory, the anti-tobacco movement has begun to acquire a noxious odor of its own.

II.

Hilts makes two principal arguments about the tobacco industry. The first of them is that the cigarette manufacturers have known about the dangers of smoking for years and have consistently lied to cover up that knowledge. The basis for this claim is, in part, several thousands of pages of internal industry documents that were stolen from the tobacco giant Brown and Williamson by a paralegal in the late 1980s and then leaked, first to anti-tobacco activists and then to Hilts at the *Times*. It is a fascinating story and Hilts tells it with relish, beginning with his visit to the whistleblower himself, a divorced 53-year-old former professor of drama named Merrell Williams, now in hiding somewhere on the Gulf Coast. (Which, remember, is how another Grisham novel ends.)

"After the beginning of an interview over beer," Hilts writes,

> he and I repaired to his hideout, a small modern apartment in a little maze of modern apartments that seemed a little out of place in the trees and among the semi-rural town strung out along the old highway, which had been long since bypassed by the interstate.
>
> The refrigerator had little food, but plenty of beer and wine. Boxes were not yet unpacked, the room was dark, and there were no lamps set up yet. Mr. Williams and I sat in the dark, with a weak light coming in from the kitchen. He had been there for six weeks; his two daughters, he fretted, were still in Louisville, vulnerable to impulses of his former wife and to anything his imagination could conjure up about angry tobacco company employees who wanted revenge on him. "No, I don't really think they're in danger," he said. "No, not really."

Jobless and down on his luck, Williams took a job in 1987 with a law firm handling part of the legal defense in tobacco liability cases for Brown and Williamson, the country's third largest cigarette manufacturer. His task was to read through mountains of memos and internal reports and "scrub," separating out those that would hurt the company in court from those that would help them, and from the beginning what he read began to horrify him. "I went to the filing cabinet," he tells Hilts, "opened it up, and said to myself, well, it looks as if these people are engaged in, ahhhh, murder."

Confused, Williams retreated to the mountains of Kentucky to sort things out.

> As he stood in the mountains, he said, he was frustrated with life in general. "Just tell me what the hell I need to do," he said, speaking to the air or God. "I was stricken by an attack of Ghandism. I was freezing cold, my dumb girlfriend was still smoking, and I am not going to say that God said, 'steal documents,' but after that, I did.... I became captivated by the idea—have you read Jean Genet? [He had] kind of a spiritual thief inside him. It's an absurdity, I know. I just had to do it."

Back at work, Williams was transformed. He would slip documents into a back brace that he wore under his shirt, photocopy them and then smuggle them back. He would walk by someone else's desk, glance at incriminating documents and come back later to copy them. He

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would come in at 5:30 in the morning on Saturday, when the guards weren't there, and pick out whatever struck him as most outrageous: studies that showed tobacco executives had known for years about the threat of lung cancer and heart disease, marketing plans aimed at addicting young smokers. Eventually he amassed a treasure trove of some of the most incriminating material ever to have emerged about the tobacco industry. "The ones I picked were always the kind of things that there was just no way of denying it," Williams told Hilts. "They had denied to a magistrate in California that they had done any biological studies on the hazards of smoking. They said they had just never done them, had nothing to do with it. But all of a sudden I had the biological studies."

If *The Runaway Jury* is an example of Grisham imitating life, then the tale of Merrell Williams is an example of life imitating Grisham. One day, Hilts writes, Williams was "sitting on a boat, stilled by a storm in the Gulf and tied up, going nowhere for many hours." He picked up *The Firm*, which is, after all, about a man in the South who steals incriminating documents from a law firm and then runs for his life, and as he read it, he told Hilts, he whispered to himself in horror: "Oh My God!"

Williams's documents have played two very important roles in the fight against tobacco. The first is that they have made it much easier for plaintiffs' attorneys successfully to sue cigarette manufacturers. In the Jacksonville lawsuit lost by Brown and Williamson in August, the jury was at first split, stymied by the central argument of the tobacco attorneys, which was that the defendant, Grady Carter, was responsible for his own smoking. Then they went back into the documents contained in Williams's treasure trove and introduced as evidence in the trial. Some were read aloud by the jury foreman, some pages with key passages dog-eared for future reference. "Nicotine is addictive," begins one notable memo, written in 1963 by B&W's top counsel. "We are, then, in the business of selling nicotine, an addictive drug effective in the release of stress mechanisms." After almost ten hours of deliberations, the deadlock turned into a 5 to 1 advantage for the plaintiff. "Some of those lines—I don't think I'll ever forget them," one of the jurors told *The Wall Street Journal*. "Not only did they make blatant statements admitting to the dangers, but they didn't make their findings public."

Williams's purloined documents have also played a key part in one of the central debates in the tobacco controversy, namely the question of informed choice. All tobacco lawsuits involve smokers who took up their habit before 1966, which was the year in which the Surgeon General first mandated health warnings on cigarette packages and advertisements. Smokers after that point are considered to have been duly warned. As such, they can no longer sue cigarette makers for damages. In the years before the warnings were in place, however, plaintiffs' lawyers argue that an informed choice about smoking was not possible. How could it have been, if the information needed to make a proper decision was being suppressed by the industry?

Hilts makes a second critical point in his brief against the tobacco industry, and it is that nicotine addiction is a phenomenon virtually unique to adolescents. "Among those over the age of 21 who take up smoking for the first time," he writes:

> more than 90 percent soon drop it completely. It takes more than a year, and sometimes up to three years, to establish a nicotine addiction; adults simply don't stick with it.... Put in market terms, the most important datum of the tobacco trade is that, among those who will be their customers for life, 89 percent have already become their customers by age 19. In fact three-quarters had already joined the ranks of users by age 17.

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Under the direction of Pierre Nora

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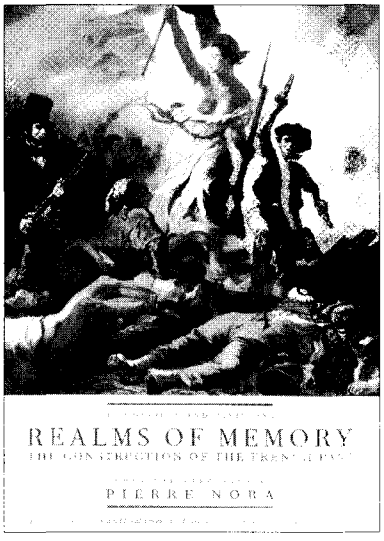

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Drawing on internal industry studies and market research, Hilts paints a detailed picture of how this happens. In a memo written in 1972, for instance, Claude Teague, assistant chief of R&D at R.J. Reynolds, wrote that people begin to smoke "for purely psychological reasons—to emulate a valued image, to conform, to experiment, to defy, to be daring, to have something to do with his hands, and the like." The chief gratification sought by young smokers is social, to be part of the group and respected. "Smoking appeals to the very young," Hilts writes, "not because of its nicotine, but chiefly for a number of social reasons—they need this product as a badge of daring and independence, and this is at least partly *because* it is dangerous and discouraged by authorities. Adults *do not* start smoking because that social motivation is not present; adults have already formed up their image of themselves, and found the necessary badges of independence and contrariness elsewhere."

Here is the great paradox of smoking: the warnings that serve to discourage the decision to smoke among adults have the opposite effect among teenagers. A classic example of this pattern has been demonstrated by John Pierce of the University of California at San Diego, who looked at the impact of the sudden increase in ads targeting women in 1967, as typified by the Virginia Slims "You've come a long way, baby" campaign. Among girls over 18, the campaign had little effect. In fact, from 1960 onward the number of girls over 18 starting smoking steadily fell, as medical evidence of the hazards of smoking began to be well known. Among girls under 17, however, the trend is exactly opposite. Through the '60s, the number of girls in this age bracket beginning smoking steadily rose, and with the advent of tobacco campaigns aimed at women those numbers soared.

The explanation for this is not simply that advertising is more effective among the young. It is that reaching one adolescent with a carefully crafted message has a kind of multiplier effect. The message of advertising, Hilts writes, is "filtered through the perceptions and tastes of slightly older, model smokers. So those who take up the habit are carriers: they infect their younger peers." According to one researcher, a boy is eight times more likely to smoke if his best friend does, and a girl is six times as likely if her best friend does.

What Hilts argues—and it has become a central argument of the anti-tobacco movement—is that the industry has cynically and deliberately manipulated this vulnerability of adolescents. The idea that smoking is an adult decision is a sham: it is instead a decision made in the weakness of adolescence and then perpetuated throughout adulthood by the power of nicotine's grip. In every tobacco liability case, plaintiffs' attorneys have taken care to select smokers who fit this classic profile of addiction. It is no coincidence that both Grady Carter and Rose Cippolone—the only two plaintiffs to have won even one round with the industry—started smoking in their teens and were so hopelessly addicted that they defied the advice of doctors and the pleading of family and friends, and quit only after they were diagnosed with lung cancer. They won because they were seen as helpless, as overmatched by their addiction.

These arguments, the argument from choice and the argument from addiction, are everywhere in the great tobacco wars of the day; but it isn't at all difficult to see that they have a number of problems. To begin with, the idea that the suppression of information about the evils of tobacco made it impossible for smokers to make an informed decision is one of those slippery half-truths dreamed up by liability lawyers. *Reader's Digest*, one of the largest-circulation magazines in the world, had begun an aggressive campaign against tobacco by the early 1950s, running articles with titles such as "Cancer by the Carton." By 1952, 40 percent of the American public believed smoking caused lung cancer. In 1953, two researchers at the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York published a famous and highly publicized paper showing that painting smoke condensate from cigarettes onto the skin of mice led to tumors in 44 percent of the animals. Nor was the addictiveness of cigarettes any great secret. As Richard Kluger writes in *Ashes to Ashes*, his magisterial history of the tobacco industry: "That nicotine was the ingredient in tobacco that induced a habitual craving for, dependency upon, or addiction to smoking cigarettes—call it what you will—had been common scientific knowledge for much of the twentieth century."

By and large, then, the secret research undertaken by the cigarette manufacturers on the dangers of smoking and the addictiveness of nicotine, the research that has so captured the imagination of the anti-smoking movement, merely followed and elaborated on conclusions already undertaken and confirmed by mainstream medical science. The fact that the tobacco companies hid this research did not mean that the public at large was prevented from learning about the evils of cigarettes. It just meant that the public did not learn about the evils of cigarettes from the cigarette manufacturers.

Now, I suppose that somewhere there may be people more inclined to trust tobacco companies over independent scientists on the question of the safety of cigarettes. But it should be noted that not even Grady Carter and Rose Cippolone, the plaintiffs selected because they perfectly illustrated every conceivable anti-tobacco argument, were just this naïve. During the Jacksonville trial, Carter testified that he was given the *Reader's Digest* articles (among others) by family and friends. His son sent him pictures of diseased lungs. He chose a doctor who smoked to avoid getting a lecture about his habit. He once figured out that he had a one in three chance of getting lung cancer and predicted that he would be one of the lucky two. Like everyone else in America, in other words, Carter knew all along that smoking was dangerous. So why should it possibly matter—outside of some narrow consideration of liability law—that the company that made his cigarettes didn't join in the chorus?

During the Cippolone lawsuit, attorneys for the plaintiff questioned Kinsley V. Dey, the president of the Liggett cigarette manufacturer, about his company's attempts in 1955 to duplicate the Sloan Kettering mouse research. Hilts presents the exchange with all the indignation that he can muster. But it is the phoniest kind of indignation, the kind that pretends a lie is vicious when it is merely pathetic. Call me cynical, but when I read this I found it hard not to laugh:

> Lawyer: What was the purpose of this? [repeating the mouse research]
> Dey: To try to reduce tumors on the backs of mice.
> Lawyer: It had nothing to do with health and welfare of human beings? Is that correct?
> Dey: That's correct.
> Lawyer: How much did the study cost?
> Dey: A lot.... Probably between $15 million and more.
> Lawyer: And this was to save rats, right? Or mice? You spent all this money to save mice the problem of developing tumors, is that correct?

III.

The bigger problem confronting the tobacco abolitionists is that they are logically divided against themselves. The argument from choice contradicts the argument from addiction. The former assumes that smoking involves an adult decision, in which correct information about the risks of smoking is critical, because truth can ap-

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peal to reason and reason can act on truth. The latter assumes that smoking is an adolescent decision, in which correct information about risk is less important than a host of unrelated social, emotional and psychological factors, and behavior has little or nothing to do with truth or reason. The liability lawyers spend all their time arguing for informed choice. The Food and Drug Administration, on the contrary, proposes a scheme that would deny choice, banning all kinds of advertising and restricting access to cigarettes. So which is it?

For the anti-smoking movement, I think, the answer has to be that smoking is an addiction. The reason is simple: if you take the argument from choice to its logical conclusion, it is very hard to justify any government intervention against cigarettes at all. Consider, for example, the argument that smoking is bad because smokers cost society a lot of money. Right now, seven states are suing the tobacco industry on precisely these grounds to recoup the allegedly higher Medicaid costs incurred by smokers. The premise of this suit, however, isn't true. Smokers may run up higher medical costs during their lifetimes, but they die eight years earlier, on average, than nonsmokers, which means that that amount is more than offset by the lower Social Security and Medicare costs normally associated with old age, and the huge amount in extra taxes that smokers pay on their cigarettes. The actual amount of this "smoker's subsidy" varies from study to study, but the best estimates are roughly that, for every pack of cigarettes consumed by a smoker, society saves between 20 and 30 cents.

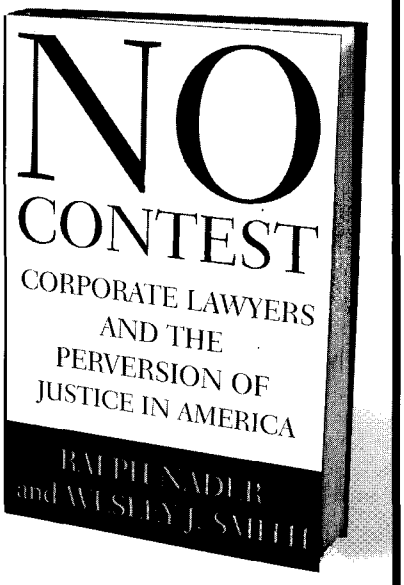
Fine. What about "passive smoking," or the harm that smokers do to nonsmokers through secondhand smoke? This argument isn't much better. In a recent article in the journal *Regulation*, Kip Viscusi points out that of the eleven studies of lung cancer risks associated with secondhand smoke, only one showed statistically significant effect above the 10 percent confidence level, and "in some cases the influences were in the wrong direction (that is, that people exposed to smokers showed a lower than expected risk of lung cancer)." In the case of heart disease, Viscusi points out, the Environmental Protection Agency has based its analysis on only a single study, which is full of caveats such as the following: "While the lung cancer risk among never-smokers exposed to [environmental tobacco smoke] is well established, a possible risk of heart disease due to ETS is more controversial.... There are many risk factors for heart disease, and it is difficult to control well for all of them....A number of assumptions are involved in estimating the disease mortality due to ETS, adding an unfortunate level of uncertainty." Viscusi concludes that the actual health risk from secondhand smoke is probably very small, roughly equivalent to the risks associated from drinking chlorinated water.

The case against smoking, then, rests entirely on preventing the harm that smokers do to themselves. But this is a much trickier proposition than either of the other two arguments about external costs. Smoking is a dangerous habit, but it is not a habit without some compensatory advantages. It is not, in other words, suicide. In fact, it is more like a weakness for rich food or riding a motorcycle. In *Ashes to Ashes*, Kluger discusses what is known as the Nesbitt paradox, named for the researcher who conducted a famous set of experiments on smokers in the early 1970s. Paul Nesbitt took three groups of subject: nonsmokers, low-tar brand smokers, and high-tar smokers. He told the smokers to inhale every thirty seconds, while he administered a series of twenty-eight steadily increasing electrical shocks every fifteen seconds. Nesbitt's theory was that if smoking had a tranquilizing effect, then the high-tar smokers should be able to absorb more shocks than the low-tar smokers, who in turn should be able to take more punishment than the nonsmokers. That is exactly what he found.

This was the paradox: one stimulant apparently had the effect of neutralizing another stimulant. Nesbitt concluded that the effect of smoking is to raise what you might call the arousal baseline. Smoking, he explained, keeps the body so excited, so revved up, that other shocks to the system make less of an impact. To put it another way: the sight of a car traveling ninety miles per hour is relatively ordinary, if you are already driving at seventy miles an hour yourself, but if you are crawling along the highway at twenty-five miles per hour, it is terrifying. "Smoking can then be perceived as a tranquilizer not despite its short term effects but because of them," Kluger concludes. "The known level of excitation, that is, seemed to soften the blow or, at the other end of the emotional spectrum, to serve as ballast for the joyride and keep the passenger from spinning out of control."

This is a therapeutic effect. It sounds, in fact, rather like the arguments made on behalf of Prozac. This is no coincidence, since tobacco industry officials have long realized that their true competitors are the drug companies. Listen to Claude Teague, the assistant research chief at R.J. Reynolds, again in a 1972 memo.

What happened to justice for all?



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> In a sense the tobacco industry may be thought of as being a specialized, highly ritualized and stylized segment of the pharmaceutical industry.... in different situations and at different dose levels, nicotine appears to act as a stimulant, depressant, tranquilizer, psychic energizer, appetite reducer ... to name but a few of the varied and often contradictory effects attributed to it. Many of these same effects may be achieved with other physiologically active materials such as caffeine, alcohol, tranquilizers, sedatives, euphorics and the like. Therefore, in addition to competing with products of the tobacco industry, our products may, in a sense, compete with a variety of other products with certain types of drug action.

Of course, tobacco is not really Prozac. It is Prozac with a fairly serious set of side effects. Richard Rogers, an epidemiologist at the University of Colorado, estimates that the life expectancy of a woman between the ages of 55 and 59 who has never smoked is thirty-two years, while the life expectancy for a current smoker in the same age range is twenty-six years. Still, if someone wants to trade six years of their own life for a crutch against the pressures of modern existence, it is tough to argue they should not have that right. "It is part of human nature to make bad choices," Jacob Weisberg argues, persuasively, in his recent book *In Defense of Government*. "We need to accept them. That is not to say that freedom is incompatible with a modicum of paternalism; cigarettes should be kept away from minors. The government ought to propagandize relentlessly against smoking, as it does. But citizens of a free country have a right to do things that are dumb, even dangerous to themselves, so long as they don't harm others."

The point is that choice is a slippery thing, and that free will is a more complicated and less purely utilitarian faculty than the anti-smoking movement might have supposed. It is possible to argue, in fact, that all the anti-smoking arguments that turn on the question of informed choice—all of the huffing and puffing over the Merrell Williams treasure trove, the endless lawsuits focusing on what the tobacco industry knew and when—inevitably rebound to the favor of the tobacco industry. After all, the implication that smokers could have made an informed decision in 1960 or 1955, if only the industry had been honest, is that today, when all the information about smoking's danger is admitted and known to the public, an informed decision *is* possible. And this turns the smoking argument into an argument over rights; it allows adolescents to indulge in the fantasy that they are making a rational choice about smoking, when in fact they are doing anything but.

The truth, though, is more complicated and less rational. What smokers do know or don't know about the risks of smoking may have very little to do with their decision to start smoking. Information is not the key to an anti-smoking argument and an informed choice is not the goal. The only way to curb the habit is to do what the FDA is now proposing to do, to treat smoking as a pediatric addiction—to treat it not as a choice but as a disease.

It would have been nice if Hilts (and many other enemies of tobacco) had acknowledged this problem. But then he would have had to concede that Merrell Williams and his cartons of purloined documents are really just a red herring. And where then would his book (and the speeches of politicians) have found its melodrama, its Grishamness? "He was 53 years old, wore a work shirt and jeans, and looked troubled and unsure of himself in the bar," Hilts writes of Williams, in my favorite passage.

> He had committed what he knew were acts that might be illegal, and he wasn't sure exactly why he had done it, either.
>
> He wanted assurance from the reporter first that he was actually a reporter and not an agent of the tobacco companies. At first, when the reporter appeared with a white shirt, dark suit and tie from his Northern business, Merrell said he would not admit having any documents. "You could be anybody," he said. "Do you have identification?" The reporter showed his blue-and-white *New York Times* building pass.
>
> "I had not read *The Firm*," he said. "First, I lived it. Then I read it."

IV.

The conclusion that smoking is addictive returns us to the question of the intemperance of the tobacco rout. The argument from choice leads only to the conclusion that tobacco executives are liars, which is not a terribly original or exceptional thing to say about a corporate executive. If smoking is an addiction, however, those who profit from it, who lure the young into chemical dependency, are really little more than drug dealers, right? So why shouldn't Hilts compare tobacco executives to Nazis? Why shouldn't Gore denounce them from his bully pulpit?

Here, though, Hilts and the anti-smoking advocates make the second of their mistakes. The analogy between drug dealers and cigarette executives does not work. Drug dealers, in the popular imagination, are predators. One of the critical aspects of the drug dealing mythology is that the dealer does not use the drugs he sells. He knows that they are dangerous, but he lures others into using them anyway. (The plot of the movie *Scarface* turned on its hero's violation of the drug dealer's cardinal rule: "don't get high on your own supply.") Tobacco executives, by contrast, fall into a very different category of substance peddler. They overwhelmingly use the drugs that they sell.

When I say that they "use" cigarettes, I don't mean that everyone who works, or has worked, for the tobacco industry smokes. Among the upper levels of industry management, however, smoking is very close to universal. This is a striking and repercussive fact. In 1994, Roger Rosenblatt interviewed a half dozen of the top executives of Philip Morris for an article in *The New York Times Magazine*, and every one of them claimed to be a smoker. It is clearly a requirement of this corporate culture. One of the best moments in Richard Kluger's extraordinary history of Philip Morris and the anti-smoking movement is his description of what happened when, in 1991, the company top spot was taken, for the first time, by a non-smoker. Michael Miles had come to Philip Morris from the food businesses the company had bought in the 1980s. Here is an obviously uncomfortable Miles at his first press conference:

> Why was it, reporters pressed him, that he himself did not smoke? His answer presaged lingering suspicions over his claimed serenity in playing the role of the capitalist world's chief peddler of cigarettes, a product accused of annually killing multitudes: "I used to smoke, and for some reason that I can't even remember I lost my taste for it.... I used to eat a lot of scallops and don't anymore. It's just one of those things."
>
> A few weeks later, Miles had to face the issue again.
>
> At the stockholders' meeting ... Miles was reminded of the difficult position he had won for himself when a Philip Morris shareholder stood up to lament the fate of the company's chief rival, RJR, after it had been taken over by what he called "the biscuit makers," meaning executives from Nabisco. He told the PM management arrayed on stage that it was tobacco that had made the company what it was, now adding, "I would hate to see Philip Morris turned over to the salad-and-mayonnaise makers." Former mayo-maker Miles rose and in his best abbreviated style answered, "Comment taken—please don't be concerned."

The shareholders' worry was that people who don't know the tobacco industry won't be loyal to it. But it is not hard to see the subtext of the remark—that part of knowing the industry and being loyal to tobacco is to use tobacco yourself.

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What makes it morally possible to participate in the dubious tobacco experiment, in fact, is that those who run the experiment are themselves also its subjects. The non-smoker at a tobacco firm is an outsider, and by 1994 Miles was out the door. "I thought it was better to return the company to lifetime executives with tobacco juice in their veins," he said, in his resignation letter. His replacement was Geoffrey Bible, who, as Kluger tells us, was an "unapologetic pack-a-day smoker." The smokers were back in charge.

The overwhelming presence of smokers in the tobacco industry changes, in a fundamental way, the moral context of their attempts to addict young smokers. Tobacco industry executives are not merely victimizers of the addicted. They are themselves victims of addiction. They are not predators looking for prey, they are cult members looking for converts. Both Hilts and Rosenblatt spend a lot of time trying to explain how it is, as Rosenblatt puts it, that "good, smart, decent men manage to contribute to a wicked enterprise." Rosenblatt answers this, as does Hilts, with the standard pop psychology line about the assumption of group identity:

> The best answer, which isn't particularly satisfying, is that people in groups behave differently, and usually worse, than they do singly. In speaking with these Philip Morris executives, I felt the presence of the company within the person. In the end, I felt that I was speaking with more company than person, or perhaps to a person who could no longer distinguish between the two. In this situation, in which the company has effectively absorbed its employees in its moral universe ...

But this analysis is needlessly complicated. Philip Morris is a company run by smokers that acts precisely as you would expect a company run by smokers to act. Tobacco companies try to make smoking seem as glamorous as possible. That's also what smokers do. Tobacco companies try to build a socially acceptable environment for smoking. That's also what smokers do. And how do tobacco executives wake up in the morning and look themselves in the mirror, knowing that they are going to go out and addict people? Because they are themselves addicted. Like any member of a deviant subculture, their primary focus is to legitimize their own behavior.

In his account of why adolescents begin to smoke, Hilts talks briefly about the critical role of peer pressure: adolescents take cues about the acceptability of smoking from older and respected peers, and a boy is eight times more likely to smoke if his best friend smokes. But he never follows through on this observation, which is a shame, since it suggests that adolescents smoke not only because companies run by smokers tell them that it is fine to smoke, but also because the smokers that they hang out with tell them it is fine to smoke. It suggests, in other words, that there is little practical difference between these two groups, no bright line that distinguishes the culpability of the merchants from the culpability of their customers.

Smoking is caused by all smokers, whether they work for Philip Morris or not. Hilts writes that he was himself "enamored of the [smoking] habit for ten years." He does not follow through on the significance of this admission, and by the end of the book it starts to weigh heavily on the reader. Never mind the tobacco industry. In those ten years, how many smokers did Hilts addict?

Richard Kluger has written a very different book than Philip Hilts. Kluger is a historian, not a polemicist, and his innovation is to tell the story of Philip Morris's ascendance in tandem with the story of the anti-smoking movement, cutting back and forth like a gifted movie director. The juxtaposition is jarring. The Philip Morris sections are all about brilliant marketing strategies and wily executives. Kluger's dense text is full of fascinating digressions about how the industry mastered the art of modern marketing in the '40s, '50s and '60s. The story of Philip Morris's long struggle against R.J. Reynolds—the latter was, for a long time, a much bigger company—will leave you cheering wildly for the underdog. And then, just as you marvel at some new Philip Morris coup, Kluger will switch back to the pioneering research of some young scientists in the 1950s nailing down the dangers of smoking, or talk about the political battles that delayed the beginning of the war on smoking, or the sleazy tactics by which the tobacco barons sought to placate public alarm.

This is Kluger's way of addressing the problem that so engages Hilts, the problem of reconciling tobacco's status as a legitimate business with its position as one of the world's deadliest products. Instead of forcing some kind of explanation, however, Kluger simply presents the two stories, side by side. The result is that *Ashes to Ashes*, all 800 or so pages of it, is not as neat and coherent a narrative as, say, the story of Merrell Williams. Yet it is a far more successful book, for it is this very demand for narrative, for heroes and villains, that dooms Hilts's enterprise and hobbles the discussion of the subject in American politics. Kluger's

Democracy Disagreement

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Photo: M. Rebecca Fr...

"Gutmann and Thompson confront the culture wars head on, asking how we can deliberate our way through our disagreements. Their answers are thoughtful, original, and powerful...Everyone who considers himself a responsible citizen should read *Democracy and Disagreement*... It actually might help us resolve our current moral crises."
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—CASS R. SUNSTEIN

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story is disjointed because the story of tobacco is disjointed. History, unlike polemic, always seems a little untidy.

Kluger ends his book with a suggestion for resolving the tobacco wars. Congress, he argues, should indemnify the cigarette manufacturers against all present and future liability suits. In exchange, the industry should agree to complete oversight by the FDA, including a commitment steadily to lower nicotine levels until they are below the point of addiction. "Would it not, then, make sense," he asks, "for the tobacco industry, rather than fighting to the bitter end, to abandon its lush but precarious existence beside the ever-rumbling volcano and make peace with the American public...?" Without such a compromise, Kluger argues, there is no other way to "relieve the severest effects of a deadly product that, practically speaking, cannot be outlawed."

There is much wisdom in this approach, particularly in the recognition that the only way to make real progress against smoking is to abandon the search for a culprit. Of course, one would have thought that this was obvious from America's other great failed social encounter with addiction: the debate over illegal drugs. In that debate, liberals, the same liberals who are so single-mindedly focused on the evils of tobacco, insist that the context in which heroin and cocaine are used is more important than the choice to use the drugs themselves; and conservatives, the same conservatives who are so proudly indifferent to the perils of nicotine, swear up and down that drug use is about choosing drugs and little else. These are not ironies, they are contradictions; and with such contradictions, it is no wonder that this country has an incoherent drug policy. What both sides need to remember is that there is a phenomenon in human life in which free will has only a secondary place—in which, in fact, appeals to free will serve only to complicate and to confuse—and that is disease. Since addiction is a disease, as the FDA has properly defined it, all this tangled and arbitrary name-calling and blame-casting is beside the point. Diseases are not criminal enterprises. They demand treatment, not protection. •

Prometheus Unzipped

BY FRANK KERMODE

Forbidden Knowledge: From Prometheus to Pornography by Roger Shattuck

(St. Martin's Press, 369 pp., $26.95)

We have an everyday familiarity with the notion that some knowledge is forbidden or restricted. The "need to know" is a necessary qualification for a share in state and military secrets, but in the form of professional confidentiality it applies in quite ordinary medical and legal situations, too. It is flagrantly violated in gossip, the essence of which is to inform other persons of what most of them have no need whatsoever to know.

Curiosity, we were told as tiresomely inquiring children, killed the cat; but we were also commended for being curious, for wanting to find things out. Were we born without curiosity we would never undertake the complicated process of imitation and selection that enables us to use language. Later decisions as to when it was right or wrong to be curious were not ours to make. Freud attached much importance to a breach of a primal prohibition against discovering what went on between our parents, and other forms of curiosity were ruled out with almost equal strictness. When Hamlet speculates about the progress of Alexander's remains from dust to bung-hole, Horatio reproves him: "'t'were to consider too curiously to consider so." Or, as we might say: stop being so morbid. Keats asks to be saved "from curious conscience, that still hoards its strength for darkness," an internal "burrowing" enemy.

These are bad manifestations of curiosity. Yet the kind of curiosity that led to the cracking of the Enigma cipher in the Second World War was greatly admired. "Curious" was laudatory when applied to jewels or needlework (wrought with care), but the word was minatory when used to classify certain erotic books. Or it may mean, as for *Alice in Wonderland*, simply "strange." The lexicography is more complex than I have suggested, and its complexity reflects rather accurately the ambiguities in our moral and aesthetic attitudes to knowledge.

In devoting curious consideration to the matter of forbidden knowledge, Roger Shattuck has to go into some of these semantic and historical implications, but his primary motive is to discover whether some kinds of knowledge that are not in our time strenuously forbidden really ought to be forbidden. To use an analogy on which Shattuck may be too apt to rely, we have lately come to recognize a need to limit the pollution of the physical environment. Should we not also try, then, to prevent the pollution of our intellectual environment?

There would be nothing new about declaring some kinds of knowledge off limits. As Shattuck remarks, the desire to know, the lust to learn more and more about everything, has nearly always been accompanied by its shadow, a sense of the danger of knowing too much. In this connection he discusses at some length Milton's *Paradise Lost*, an encyclopedic poem that repeatedly warns against undue curiosity. To eat the forbidden apple was to have a knowledge of good and evil it would be better to do without. "Know to know no more," is the advice of the poet to Adam and Eve, and it is echoed by the archangel Raphael when, after lecturing on all manner of other matters, he refuses to explain the celestial motions:

> Heaven is for thee too high
> To know what passes there; be lowly wise:
> Think only what concerns thee and thy being ...

The point is even more emphatically made in *Paradise Regained*, when Jesus scorns all of Satan's temptations, the last and highest of which is universal knowledge. He refuses the offer of Greek poetry, oratory and philosophy:

> Think not but that I know those things, or think
> I know them not; not therefore am I short
> Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
> Light from above, from the fountain of light,
> No other doctrine needs ...

That forbidden knowledge is the gravest of all temptations is borne out by the hierarchical scheme—pleasures of the senses, beauty, riches, power, knowledge of the creation—used by Milton and also by his friend Andrew Marvell in his "Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure." The rejection of all but the knowledge that saves the soul was likewise a theme of John Donne's learned "Second Anniversarie":

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In heaven thou straight know'st all concerning it.
And what concerns it not shalt straight forget.

Shattuck touches on the long history of these ideas, which in the Christian tradition go back to Augustine and beyond. *Curiositas* is always a powerful temptation, an enemy of salvation; and many learned men, including puritan divines up to the seventeenth century, emphasized the point with varying degrees of severity, some, like Milton's Jesus, admitting the Bible as the sole legitimate source of humanly relevant information. It may seem inconsistent of Milton to have opposed censorship in *Areopagitica*, a work that we respect for its defense of our right to free inquiry into almost everything, and then to have gone on to oppose curiosity in these later works. But this duplicity is a familiar aspect of the whole subject, and in Milton's case we can only say that he leaned one way in the revolutionary 1640s and the other way in the disappointed years after the Restoration.

After that, intellectual moods and styles change. Goethe's insatiably curious Faust breaks all the bounds, yet he is saved in the end. And now there develops a desire to excuse or even to eulogize heroic excess, as with Don Juan, (though Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is a notable exception). The tendency to admire heroic curiosity has remained strong, as one would expect in a post-Enlightenment era which assumes that knowledge should be open. And yet there is, Shattuck suggests, a significant counter-current, a celebration of heroic abstinence. The knowledge to be abstained from is represented (with biblical precedents, of course) in the specialized form of sexual knowledge, and the chosen exemplars of abstinence are Mme. de Lafayette's novel *La Princesse de Clèves*, published in 1678, and Emily Dickinson—an odd pairing, but Shattuck is usually prepared to make detours and excursions from his main argument, wanting to deploy his "kit full of stories." The novel describes remarkable forbearance and abstinence in sexual matters; the poet renounces intimacy as a form of curiosity.

Here there are signs that Shattuck is reviving the ancient association of the forbidden with the sexual. Before he settles down to exploring that association, he does have a long chapter on Melville and Camus. "Can knowledge get in the way of justice?" (It seems that many students, reading *The Stranger*, sympathize with the murderer, Meursault.) But this is a diversion on the way to the heart of the book, which, summarily speaking, is a discussion of modern knowledge as exemplified by advances in technology and as exemplified especially in pornography.

Shattuck questions the assumption of many scientists that they are entitled to know whatever they can contrive to find out. "Does scientific research, backed by immense technological and political support, represent the ultimate *sin* of Western civilization?" Some other scientists are not so sure. Was the Manhattan Project a sin, as J. Robert Oppenheimer ruefully suggested? Some offer a compromise, saying that pure science admits no limits, while allowing that applied science, technology, must do so; but Shattuck is skeptical of the distinction. Can the study of recombinant DNA be pure science, without technological sequels? Here, too, there are scientists who share Shattuck's view as well as many of equal authority who don't. For those who recall the dark history of eugenics, the thought of a new variety of such science can be worrying. For others, there is no continuity between the old and the new, between Nazi eugenics and modern genetics.

Shattuck advises "a wise agnosticism," but he has a preference, and it is for the imposition of limits: "could we conceivably abstain," he asks of the Human

Was it a handshake . . .
or sleight of hand?

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Genome Project, "like the Princesse de Clèves?" The parallel is not a very exact one. An HGP researcher might resist a temptation to commit adultery and still go on researching as randily as ever, quite unpersuaded by an analogy between adultery and science. Shattuck says he would like scientists to make a formal declaration of integrity on the lines of the medical Hippocratic Oath, or perhaps of Mme. de Lafayette's heroine. Yet, even as he struggles with these ideas about controlling research, he admits that he can't quite believe that any form of knowledge can be evil in itself.

He does seem to question that generalization, however, when he comes to the climactic section of his book, which is about the Marquis de Sade and the twentieth-century revival of interest in his work. Sade has come (rather in the manner of Faust and Don Juan) to be regarded as an heroic figure, a great paradoxical moralist and, at least equally implausibly, a great writer. Reminding us that the works of the divine Marquis are now in the canon of the French Pléiade editions and, since the relaxation of the British and American obscenity laws, easily available in English translation, he takes a good look at Sade's fictions, not without prior warning that we may be disgusted by some of the passages that he will have to quote.

We are to bear in mind that notorious perverted murderers as well as literary critics have been admirers of de Sade. There was the British murderer Ian Brady, who, with a female accomplice, tortured his child victims to death, tape-recording their screams and taking pornographic photographs before burying them on the moors. Brady had a small library of books about torture and perversion, and he confessed at his trial to "enjoying" Sade. In America there was the serial killer Ted Bundy, who in an interview on the eve of his execution in Florida condemned violent pornography, using his undoubted authority to brand it as a danger to young people.

Shattuck agrees and asks, "Shall we receive among our literary classics the works of an author who desecrates and inverts every principle of human decency...?" The material of Sade's novels is taboo, forbidden. That is a part of its attraction. Sade is, in his way, exemplary: everybody has at times wanted to defy law and convention, and most have done so, in however trivial a manner. Sade shows how it is done on a grand scale. Shattuck thinks it important that the Marquis isn't playing games; he means what he says about dreary low-class pretensions to decency and morality, and about the right of aristocrats or other elites to torture and to murder their inferiors. Should we encourage the circulation of such ideas? There is a tradition, exemplified by John Stuart Mill, which holds that we would be wrong to prevent it. Let them loose, let them be defeated or qualified in open discussion. Mill recognizes "the necessity to the mental well-being of mankind (on which all their other well-being depends) of freedom of opinion." But with Sade in mind, some may think Mill too generous.

As to the Sadeian prose style, it is surprisingly conventional, matching the novelty of the narrative only in its tedious repetitiveness, though the narrative also betrays very limited imaginative resources. Shattuck asserts that Sade's work compares unfavorably with Ovid's *Art of Love*, the Chinese *Art of the Bedchamber* and the *Kama Sutra*, noting that Sade is the only sadist among the writers of these works. Camus's epigrammatic remark that "Prometheus ends up as Onan" cut the Marquis down to his true size; but this seemingly pathetic figure can nevertheless "infiltrate the moral substance of some readers." Nor is he without adjutants, for there is much material in the modern media which likewise injects indecent and immoral practices "into our moral immune system." Shattuck likes this figure and returns to it when he asks at the end of his book whether we have a moral capacity, resembling that of our immune system, to reject what is likely to damage our moral health, though itself liable to be damaged. Sade's writings, he believes, should carry, like cigarettes, a health warning on the jacket. They are "potential poison." But society shows little disposition to protect us from this danger, so we must dig deep and find our own motives for abstinence.

On this view, there are things that we should choose not to know as well as many things that we can't hope ever to know. Shattuck advocates judiciousness and temperance in the discussion of these matters—a blend of repression and freedom—but he is much concerned, as well he might be, with the problem of achieving any such equilibrium in modern society. What seems fairly sure is that attempts to control the circulation of pornography usually fail. The focus of concern changes. In the 1990s, it is the Internet. Back in the late 1960s, I sat on a committee to reform the British obscenity law, which had already been amended in favor of increased freedom from censorship. The committee recommended, ineffectually, that there should be no such law. Comparable recommendations were made in the United States; there was even a book triumphantly called *The End of Obscenity*. Some of the arguments for freedom, though they belong to a more innocent era, are still worth considering. It is surely worth remarking that, of the thousands who bought the works of Sade, only a very few seem to imitate his practices. Many may have picked up his books, laughed a while and then given up the tedious task.

For most of us, however, it is a powerful argument that one child tortured to death is one too many; and cases of that kind occur almost daily. It remains true that murderers such as Ian Brady and

What to Say to a Monster

A man I knew could never say who he was.
You know people like that. If he met a monster,
He'd encourage the monster to talk, even about eating
But couldn't say that he objected to being prey.

A day goes by; a week; a month; it's summer.
The adolescent wolverines go out scouting;
Crabs lift their claws; the praying mantis
Gets religious. This man keeps trying to adapt.

Adopt? Be adopted? It's funny, but those born
From eggs seem not to feel homeless. Something
Pushes them out, and they fly to sea, or swim
Up from the gravel, milkily transparent, and they're gone.

This man went up to monsters and asked to be
Adopted. I've done that often. Reader, are you
Fond of the Jonah story? Say to a monster,
"I may have something for you, but I can't promise."

Robert Bly

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Myra Hindley cannot be certainly shown to have acted as they did because they collected books on sexual cruelty. Perhaps they were already perverted and merely discovered in Sade a kindred spirit. But what if Brady and Bundy had access to such books as children? In any case, we wouldn't like our children to have access to them or to the hard pornography videos that you can now buy in any city. They are out there, and so are the children. To forbid access is often more than anybody can do.

But why should the young do what their elders say? It was difficult enough in the past to enforce the will of the elders without using punishments that we in our time tend to think unjustified. Now, when there is no supreme authority to back up the local variety, the task is close to impossible. Discipline, presumably, must depend entirely on bonds of love between old and young. Yet that love is precisely what the actions of pedophiles demonically parody.

So the forbidding of knowledge cannot be the answer. The answer must be to teach people how to handle what could once have been forbidden but can be forbidden no longer. This is a difficult prospect, so difficult that, while one applauds Shattuck's genuine concern with the problem, one cannot believe that his rather wandering argument offers a solution. And it should be borne in mind that a solution may not exist. As Shattuck sometimes seems to fear, the cure for our ills may depend on our acquiring a form of knowledge that now seems permanently inaccessible to us.

FRANK KERMODE is the author most recently of *Not Entitled* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

Twisted Truth

BY MICHAEL P. JOHNSON

Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol by Nell Irvin Painter

(W.W. Norton, 370 pp., $28)

Sojourner Truth is one of the most celebrated African American women of the nineteenth century, but Americans today probably find it easier to recognize her photograph than to describe what she said or did. A slave for the first thirty years of her life, Truth became an outspoken abolitionist and feminist during the 1850s when neither cause attracted much support in the North. She remained active during the Civil War and afterward, helping to organize relief efforts for ex-slaves, fighting racial discrimination on Washington, D.C. streetcars, petitioning Congress to grant western lands to former slaves and championing the vote for black men and all women. For many years, she helped to make ends meet by selling thousands of small photographs of herself, usually captioned, "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance." Today the iconography of Truth is available on lapel pins, t-shirts, refrigerator magnets and postage stamps.

People display these images because they wish to proclaim something important about themselves. But what is signaled by an icon of Sojourner Truth? Probably not fluency in Dutch, her first language; not residence in New York, her native state; not excellence as a household servant, work she did as a slave and for years afterward as a free woman; not illiteracy, although she could neither read nor write; not fervent Christianity, her marrow-deep faith; not itinerant preaching, her calling for decades; not unforgettable singing, with which she thrilled camp meetings, congregations and reform audiences for more than thirty years. No, what Sojourner Truth symbolizes, as Nell Irvin Painter observes at the outset of her new biography, is "Strong Black Woman."

Sojourner Truth, says Painter, "has become American material culture's female equivalent of Malcolm X." Painter believes that this heroic image of Truth is inaccurate, a legend invented to serve contemporary needs rather than historical veracity. "We need an heroic 'Sojourner Truth' in our public life," she writes, "to function as the authentic black woman, as a symbol who compensates for the imperfections of individual black women—especially educated, and thereby unauthentic, black women like me." This is the book's central argument, though at one point Painter stretches the

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MODERN 'ASIATIC' DESPOTISM

by: Frank A. Barbaria
400 pp. paper cover $12, cloth $14
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COMMENTS ON MODERN 'ASIATIC' DESPOTISM

DON FITZ - Editor of Worker's Democracy, "..Modern 'Asiatic' Despotism is one of the most thought-provoking investigations of the bureaucratic class to have been published in the last few decades. I would strongly recommend that anyone who is interested in the evolution of modes of exploitation should seriously study this book."

HENRY JACOBY - Historian, author, Switzerland: "The author did a good job in presenting the present state of knowledge on 'Asiatic' despotism. He is right in saying that Marx and Engels had a limited knowledge of the subject, indeed they did not do much research in it.."

LAURENS - An English anarchist: "..It is of course only fair to say.. that Barbaria is easier reading than either Wittfogel or Bahro.. It is again to his considerable credit that he did develop a new theory; evidently he was largely unaware of the efforts that had already been made in the same direction by Wittfogel.."

ED HERRON - 45 years a Marxist: "I received Modern 'Asiatic' Despotism.. I was like a good little Catholic in a 16th Century village,.. I finally read it. I was delighted that I could form an opinion in praise of it,despite my fears that I might be toying, Allah forbid, with the unorthodox. I like the writing, the good clean hammer strokes. The writing has strength and the full flavor of fresh original. It handles a tremendous subject with power and clarity. The well-stated thesis was a surprise to me, both for the clean power with the which it was written and the scope."

WILLIAM RATLIFF - Russian Review, Stanford University: "Frank Barbaria.. has grasped some fundamental truths of institutional history that have escaped many doctors of philosophy.. The quotations and style are deliberate, for Barbarias book is directed less to scholars than, as he says, to revolutionary activists, young idealists and workers. Today, he concludes, the dilemma is how can people break with "heartless 'bottomline mentality' capitalism" without unwittingly falling prey to even greater oppression of the modern 'Asiatic' despotisms. Barbaria's volume seconds the correct essence of Wittfogel's study. ..The chief virtue of Barbaria's volume is that it will be easier for the undisciplined reader to comprehend."

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racial boundaries of Truth's symbolic meaning, declaring that "Americans who buy Sojourner Truth's image invest in the idea of strong women, black or not." Whether Truth symbolizes Strong Black Woman or Strong Woman, Painter seeks to set the record straight, to portray Truth as she really was, complicated and imperfect.

This book reflects Painter's long-standing dedication to rescuing important people and developments in African American history from historical obscurity. Her work is part of the exhilarating scholarship on African American history and culture that has flourished since the 1960s, a historiographical tradition that ranks as a major collective achievement of an entire generation of historians and critics. In *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*, Painter chronicled the travails of thousands of black Southerners who voted with their feet against the white supremacist governments that returned to power across the South little more than a decade after Appomattox. In her edition of *The Narrative of Hosea Hudson: His Life as a Black Communist in the Deep South*, she recovered the story of one black man's struggle against the oppressions of the twentieth-century South.

In her new book, Painter's gaze shifts away from the South and backward in time, toward a famous black woman in the North in the era of slavery, war and emancipation, and toward the larger matter of the symbolic life of historical figures. But more is at stake than simply reconstructing Truth's life and what it meant. This book is part of what Painter terms "black women scholars' reclamation of Truth." During the late 1980s, Painter explains, "white feminist critics continued to use Truth metonymically as *the* black woman, abstracted from history and theory, [and now] black feminist critics were fighting back." Painter intends her book to post a decisive victory in this battle by correcting prevailing distortions about Truth, especially those created by white feminists. But things don't work out so well. Painter's desire to reclaim Truth subverts the goal of reconstructing Truth's life. The result is another reinvention of Sojourner Truth, a portrait that is flawed at key points by dubious interpretations of historical evidence.

Painter is hardly alone in her pursuit of the historical Truth. In 1993, Carleton Mabee and Susan Mabee Newhouse published their biography, *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend*, and in 1994 there appeared Erlene Stetson and Linda David's *Glorying in Tribulation: The Lifework of Sojourner Truth*. This boomlet in Truth studies, however, has not been triggered by the discovery of previously unknown documents. Truth supplied much of what is known about her early life in the *Narrative Of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave, Emancipated From Bodily Servitude By The State Of New York In 1828*, a small book published privately in Boston in 1850.

Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

SOJOURNER TRUTH, 1864

Olive Gilbert, a white woman active in the causes of abolition and women's rights, and a friend of William Lloyd Garrison, wrote the *Narrative* after listening to Truth dictate her life story, though Gilbert's name did not appear on the book. In the *Narrative*, as in many other pertinent documents, Truth appears as a shadow behind the scrim of a white narrator. But Truth clearly believed that the *Narrative* was a reliable account of her experiences. She almost certainly had the *Narrative* read to her, just as she often had someone, preferably children, read to her from the Bible and from newspapers. She carried copies of the *Narrative* wherever she went, selling them at lectures and reform conventions and supporting herself with the proceeds. Hoping to bolster her credibility and her sales, she sought out Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1853 and asked for a blurb. Stowe, who had catapulted to literary fame in 1852 with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, obliged with an endorsement that began, "The following narrative may be relied upon as in all respects true & faithful." Ten years later, when Truth sent the abolitionist James Redpath six copies of her book, she wrote him (that is, she had an amanuensis write him for her), "You will find them correct, they are Sojourner herself."

On the whole, Painter and Truth's other biographers follow the *Narrative* in describing the first half-century of her life. About 1797, the newborn infant who was to become Sojourner Truth was named Isabella by her parents, Betsey and James, slaves of Johannes Hardenbergh, a Dutch-speaking former colonel in the Revolutionary War and a prosperous citizen of a small village near the Hudson River, about halfway between New York City and Albany. The Hardenberghs pocketed steady profits by selling off eight or ten of Betsey's and James's children before Isabella's turn came. When she was 9 years old, she was auctioned off along with some Hardenbergh sheep.

John Neely, a local merchant, paid $100 for Isabella and evidently came to regret it. Neely spoke only English; Isabella, who had grown up hearing and speaking Dutch, could not understand him. When Isabella did not respond correctly to Neely's incomprehensible orders, he beat her mercilessly, furrowing her back with deep, permanent scars. "Now the war begun," she recalled in the

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Narrative. Neely eventually sold Isabella to a tavern keeper who, in 1810, sold her to a neighboring farmer, John Dumont, her master for the next sixteen years.

Isabella came of age at the Dumonts. She still had difficulty with English, but she was learning. She worked relentlessly and well in Dumont's fields and house; and he appreciated her efforts and said so. He whipped Isabella from time to time, she reported, but not cruelly. In the *Narrative* she recalled that "she looked upon her master as a God," and she "firmly believed that slavery was right and honorable," views that in retrospect she denounced as "the perfect stupidity of the slave." During her years at Dumont's farm, Isabella married another Dumont slave, a man named Thomas, and gave birth to five children.

The *Narrative* says nothing about Isabella's sexual experiences. Painter departs from other biographers by declaring that Isabella was the victim of sexual abuse by Dumont's wife, Sally. Painter bases this conclusion on the statement in the *Narrative* that Isabella suffered "a long series of trials [at the Dumonts]—which we must pass over in silence; some from motives of delicacy, and others, because the relation of them might inflict undeserved pain on some now living." It is possible that this passage and a similar one later in the *Narrative* refer to Sally Dumont's sexual abuse of Isabella. But many other things are also possible: that Sally Dumont punished Isabella with unspeakable harshness for what she considered slovenly work, or that John Dumont sexually abused Isabella. On this point and many others, Mabee and Newhouse provide a more cautious account in keeping with the ambiguous evidence. And yet Painter repeatedly claims that Isabella's sexual abuse by her white mistress was a fact. This is one of numerous instances throughout the book in which Painter's argument jettisons the historian's ballast of evidence, context and logic in a leap from possibility to fact.

Such lapses seldom mar Painter's discussion of Truth's religious faith. Isabella's religious awakening came barely a month before she gained her freedom under New York's emancipation law, passed in 1799, which provided that all slaves born before that date would become free on July 4, 1827. As the date of freedom neared, according to the *Narrative*, "God revealed himself to her, with all the suddenness of a flash of lightning, showing her—'that there was no place where God was not.' " After this blinding revelation, Isabella received additional visitations of the Holy Spirit, assuring her that Jesus loved her completely and forever.

Painter calls Isabella's revelations of the sanctifying knowledge of Christ's love "the secret power that black women have tapped into over the generations to counter the negation they experience in the world.... More than anything else she did or said in her life, this ability to act with the support of a powerful supernatural force and to mine its extraordinary resources made Sojourner Truth a representative African-American woman." Truth's conviction about her intimate communication with the Holy Spirit was the foundation of her extraordinary achievements during her fifty-six years as a free woman.

In 1827 Isabella became legally free. She took the surname Van Wagenen, in honor of the antislavery couple who had purchased her a year earlier, after she had run away from the Dumonts, and she became a kind of pilgrim. In 1829 she traveled to New York City, where she gravitated toward perfectionist sects, preaching, singing and witnessing the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. The perfervid tenor of the faith that she shared with her mostly white associates is nicely illustrated by her reaction when she answered a knock at the door of her employer, in 1832, and confronted a man dressed to resemble contemporary portraits of Jesus. Isabella blurted out, "Art thou the Christ?" and the man answered, "I am," whereupon Isabella dropped to the floor to kiss his feet and weep with joy.

The man called himself the Prophet Matthias and claimed that he was the Spirit of Truth, that God spoke through him. Isabella and her employer were ecstatic; they and several other New York perfectionists joined Matthias's Kingdom. The kingdom lasted for two years, before disintegrating in 1834 amid accusations of adultery (mostly true) and murder (probably untrue). Nine years later, when the Holy Spirit called Isabella to leave the wickedness of New York and become an itinerant preacher, she adopted the name Sojourner Truth and set out for the wilds of Long Island. Within a year she had made her way to a small utopian community at Northampton, Massachusetts, where she met the antislavery and women's rights activists who helped publish her *Narrative* and included her on the circuit of reform lectures and conventions that made her reputation then and since.

Truth became famous among abolitionists and feminists for her blunt, pithy statements, memorable one-liners compounded (in Frederick Douglass's characterization) "of wit and wisdom, of wild enthusiasm and flint-like common sense." According to Painter, when

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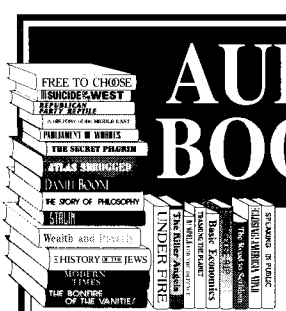

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Truth accented her bitter criticisms of slaveholders and of men with humor, she "permitted some of her hearers to ignore her meaning." White reformers, Painter claims, tended to see Truth as a fascinating entertainer, "natural and uncorrupted, an exotic." "Even today," Painter observes, "when Truth can symbolize the angry black woman for most in her audience, others see her as a kind of pet." Painter argues that such misperceptions of Truth continue to distort our understanding of her life and her significance.

Truth's speeches to antislavery and women's rights groups form the core of Painter's analysis of Truth's symbolic meaning. Painter argues that today "Truth is consumed as a signifier and beloved for what we need her to have said. Other people writing well after the fact made up what we see as most meaningful." Nothing that Truth said was recorded by her hand, although "other people" published dozens of reports of her remarks in contemporary newspapers and elsewhere. The problem is that Painter's own interpretation of Truth hinges on what these reports "made up."

Typically, when historians try to recover what has been irretrievably lost—in this case, Truth's spoken words—they proceed with caution and care. They seek out all the evidence that might help to reveal what really happened. Then they piece together an account that attempts to narrow the range of doubt about what can never be known with absolute certainty, distinguishing what was possible from what was probable, improbable or impossible. But Painter's book never sifts through all the accounts of Truth's speeches in order to decide what Truth probably said, and thereby to identify what others invented about what she said. Nor does her book offer a thorough analysis of what other people thought about Truth. Instead, she presents her own readings of speeches that she believes have been misinterpreted by others, misinterpretations responsible for what she claims is our distorted, ahistorical image of Truth. And in the course of reinterpreting what others made up about Truth, Painter makes up her own version of Truth.

Painter points to two episodes that still shape Truth's symbolic meaning today. One occurred in 1858, when Truth gave an antislavery speech in Indiana. At the end of the speech a hostile group of proslavery men shouted that Truth was really a man in disguise, and demanded that she prove her sex by privately showing her breast to women in the audience. According to a newspaper report, "Sojourner told them that her breasts had suckled many a white babe, to the exclusion of her own offspring; that some of those white babies had grown to man's estate; that, although they had suckled her colored breasts, they were, in her estimation, far more manly than they (her persecutors) appeared to be; and she quietly asked them, as she disrobed her bosom, if they, too, wished to suck!"

Painter does not question this report's accuracy. She argues that Truth humiliated the taunting white men by displaying "her older woman's black body, a body that transcends shame through hardship, [and] defeats the juvenile pricks of philistines." And yet Painter claims that Truth's words did not really mean what they seem to mean. Truth did not really nurse white children, Painter declares. For, by not suckling white children, Truth showed her "disinterest in the needs of white children and young white women" and thereby "avoided the mammy snare." When Truth bared her breasts and announced that she "had suckled many a white babe," Painter claims that she "evoked her symbolic history as a slave mother rather than her own actual experience." And because slave wet nurses were more numerous in the South than in New York, Painter surmises that "Truth in [this] performance was refashioning herself as a southerner."

Now, the truth of the report about Truth's astonishing gesture is not at all obvious. It seems odd that Truth would have tried to present herself as a Southerner while she peddled copies of her *Narrative*, a book that made crystal clear that she had been born in the North and had lived there throughout her life. More important, it is by no means certain that Truth never suckled white children. While the *Narrative* is silent on the subject, Mabee and Newhouse point out that the Dumonts had children about the same age as Truth's. It is possible that she nursed them, or other white children in the neighborhood. Moreover, almost nothing is known about Truth's activities during the late 1830s and early 1840s, raising the possibility that she served as a wet nurse after a pregnancy during those years. Such possibilities make one wonder who is refashioning whom in Painter's account.

A second episode in Truth's speaking career, this one at a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851, resulted in Truth's most famous words, the phrase that, as Painter believes, "sums up the meaning of the emblematic Sojourner Truth today: 'ar'n't I a woman?'" This remarkable question, Painter explains, "inserts blackness into feminism and gender into racial identity." And, she argues, Truth never uttered it. It was, instead, invented by a white feminist and abolitionist named Frances Dana Gage, and it has been misattributed to Truth for more than a century.

Painter notes that there was "little reason to doubt" that Truth had said "ar'n't I a woman," until she published an article on the subject in 1994. But Mabee and Newhouse devoted an entire chapter of their biography to a careful analysis of the issue, and concluded "it [is] unlikely that Truth asked the thrilling question, 'Ar'n't I a woman?'" Painter acknowledges the Mabee and Newhouse biography, but she never makes clear that her conclusion about Truth's Akron speech echoes their pioneering research.

Since the phrase "ar'n't I a woman" plays such a central part in Painter's interpretation of Truth, it is important to examine contemporary accounts of Truth's speech with care. Frances Gage, who had presided over the meeting in Akron in 1851, published her version of Truth's speech in a New York paper in 1863, while she was in Union-occupied South Carolina working with recently freed women and men. After men in the Akron audience made disparaging remarks about the weakness and the dependence of women, according to Gage, Truth spoke out: "'And ar'n't I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm,' and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing its tremendous muscular power. 'I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me—and ar'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man, (when I could get it,) and bear de lash as well—and ar'n't I a woman? I have born thirteen chillen, and seen 'em mos' all sold off into slavery, and when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard—and ar'n't I a woman?'."

Painter admits that it is impossible to recover "exactly what Truth said"; but she insists again and again that Truth did not utter the words "ar'n't I a woman." Painter considers the version of Truth's remarks published shortly after the Akron meeting by Marius Robinson, an antislavery journalist, more reliable than Gage's later account. According to Robinson, Truth said: "I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being

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equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now."

The similarity of the Gage and Robinson accounts—as well as those by other contemporaries (Mabee and Newhouse report that twenty-seven descriptions of the speech were published)—leads Stetson and David to the entirely convincing conclusion that, whether or not Truth said the words "ar'n't I a woman," that was clearly what her words meant. Truth was vividly rephrasing the old abolitionist slogan, "Am I not a man and a brother?" More powerfully, Stetson and David point out that "Am I not a woman?" was a commonplace among black and white antislavery women. Indeed, when Truth spoke to a black audience in Ashtabula County, Ohio, in 1853, a satin banner hanging from the pulpit was inscribed with the words, "Am I not a Woman and a Sister?"

Moreover, if Painter is correct that Gage's account of the Akron speech misrepresented what Truth said, then one wonders why Gage's article (and not Robinson's, the account that Painter prefers) was reprinted in the expanded edition of Truth's own book, in the edition of the *Narrative* that was published in 1878, well before Truth's death in 1883. Truth had her press notices read to her, and she paid attention to their accuracy. In 1863, when Harriet Beecher Stowe published an article titled "Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl," in *The Atlantic Monthly*, she claimed that Truth came from Africa and quoted her using the word "honey." Truth sent a letter to a Boston publication correcting Stowe's account, pointing out that she did not come from Africa and that "I never make use of the word honey." But no letter of correction appeared after the publication of Gage's account of Truth's Akron speech. Quite the contrary. Truth evidently saved a copy of Gage's article and arranged for it to be featured along with many other clippings, including Stowe's "Libyan Sibyl" in what she termed her "Book of Life," which was appended to the 1878 edition of her *Narrative*. It appears that Sojourner Truth believed that Frances Gage had quoted her accurately enough. And, if Sojourner Truth now symbolizes "Strong Black Woman" or "Strong Woman," such a reading seems perfectly congruent with the historical evidence that has come to light.

Painter believes, however, that Gage misquoted Truth, and thereby distorted her symbolic meaning. Painter observes that "Ar'n't I a woman" permitted twentieth-century feminists "searching for a poor black woman to insert into a woman's movement projecting an all-too white and middle-class image" to celebrate Truth as a strong black feminist and to ignore the inconvenient historical fact of Truth's religion. This tendency to simplify Truth into an heroic symbol that meets contemporary needs needs to be countered, Painter writes, by "serious scholarship ... [about] Truth's long life's experience ... [which was] too nuanced a mixture of frustration and triumph to work as inspiration."

This profession of respect for historical complexity is admirable. The problem is that Painter herself succumbs to the temptation that she deplores. Finally she, too, mythologizes Truth. Thus, she proclaims that "Truth embodied a fact that still bears repeating: Among the blacks are women; among the women, there are blacks," a statement that hardly seems to capture the many historical nuances of Truth's time (or of our own). More startling still, Painter's mythologization of Truth turns out to be a form of self-mythologization, too. At the end of her book she utterly collapses the distance between author and subject, announcing that "I myself have functioned as a sort of Sojourner Truth."

Painter's channeling of Sojourner Truth took place in 1995, at a session of the Organization of American Historians that dealt with how slave women and abolitionists viewed black women during the nineteenth century. During this session, Painter writes, she "was floored. And I said so," when a paper by one of the panelists attributed to Truth the words "Ar'n't I a woman?" This, she says, showed "a terrible disregard of my work," namely her 1994 article, the one that she thinks broke new ground. Painter explains that, "when the proceedings [of this OAH session] came to a standstill after my comment, I was functioning as a Sojourner Truth." She did not intend to play the part of Sojourner Truth, she says; but she was forced into this symbolic and heroic role because the "effect of my critique was ... 'electric.'" She concludes that, "even among scholars ... the assertive words of a black woman can halt the world they pierce. Black women are not ordinarily speakers and consequently are difficult to integrate into ongoing business."

I was a participant in the session in which Painter played Truth. I can report that the sizable audience was multiracial; that before Painter spoke, two lengthy papers were delivered, one by a black woman who is an assistant professor at UCLA, the other by a white woman who is an assistant professor at the University of Chicago; that, in passing, the latter paper made the only mention of Sojourner Truth; that Painter began her remarks by announcing, "My name is Nell Painter. I am a black woman;" that when the panelist accused of ignoring Painter's article responded that she was well aware of it and had cited it, Painter replied, "That's where black women always end up, in the footnotes."

Painter writes that this incident taught her that "the symbol of Sojourner Truth is stronger and more essential in our culture than the complicated historic person; and the process that makes a black woman speaking firmly into a showstopper has not come to an end." But Painter was the show, not the showstopper. The portrait that she substitutes for what she believes is an oversimplified, ahistorical image of Sojourner Truth turns out to be something of a self-portrait. And that is decidedly not the task of the historian. Truth deserves better.

MICHAEL P. JOHNSON is a professor of history at Johns Hopkins.

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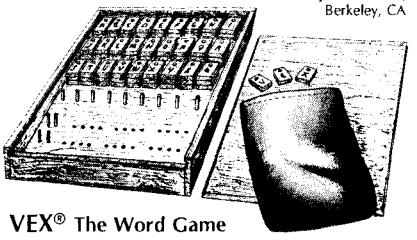
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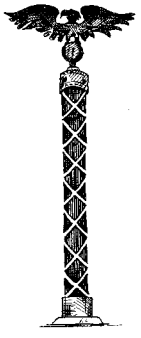
I KNOW IT'S NOT FASHIONABLE, but I believe in Big Business. My co-workers keep track of my most outrageous defenses of the free market. Generally, they're libertarian mantras ripped out of context, reserved for use in thirty-second attack ads should I ever run for office. For instance, "I don't think child porn is that big of a problem." I didn't mean that child porn is morally ambiguous; it's just that there isn't that much of it. But try explaining that to future voters. Topping my co-workers' list is this quip: "I'd have no problem if [TNR] required us to come to work naked." It's not that I'm in favor of compulsory nudity, it's just that, when it comes to private companies, the employer can demand anything he wants. Market competition for labor will keep employees from abusing that right.

IT'S BECAUSE I TRUST THE BUSINESS world so much that my harrowing recent run-ins with several of its most-respected citizens came as such a shock. Last summer, I excitedly ordered a laptop from Gateway 2000, the mail-order giant. After repeated delays, I called their 800 number to complain. Ten calls later, a customer service representative told me I could only get an answer to my question if I called at a specific hour. When I protested that I could not call at that time since it was Rosh Hashanah, the woman muttered: "Then the kike will have to wait." Enraged, I faxed a letter to Gateway's CEO. No response.

FINALLY THE COMPUTER ARRIVED. It was delivered to my parents' house in Chicago, so my father shipped it to me in Washington via Federal Express, the trusty, always-on-time mail company I had once cited as proof that we need to privatize the Postal Service. The package was late. I called. They said it was on its way. Routine, right? A dozen phone calls later, I began to worry. I nervously dialed the dispatcher. "You're making me look bad," she snapped. "If you call that 800 number again, I won't look for your box," she added. Deprived of phone privileges, I drove to FedEx's Washington warehouse. There I met a counter-worker named Robert Maxwell. He launched a Watergate-level investigation, interviewed three drivers (two on the phone, at home!), combed through the depths of the warehouse and personally examined dozens of trucks. He even promised to recover the videotapes of the box's handling. But my package never turned up. Later Maxwell asked me what was in the box. I told him it contained a laptop, and, in a V-8 moment, he hit his head with his open palm. "Computers walk out of here all the time," he said. "Never send one through FedEx." Another employee told me I should always use UPS.

AFTER TWO MORE HOURS OF FUtile searching, Larry, the warehouse manager, ordered me to leave the premises. I sat on the ground and said I wouldn't budge until I had the box. He stared at me in exasperation. I stared back. He said to leave. I said, "Call the police." The attending rent-a-cop looked sheepishly at the ground. The stalemate broke when Larry promised to call me the next day. He never did. I did get a call from FedEx Security, however, saying they considered the package stolen. Maxwell was right. Several days later FedEx Personnel called to assure me that I'd be "happy to know they were fixing the problem ... by terminating Maxwell." Why fire the *only* employee I'd dealt with who represented the company well? He shouldn't have said FedEx packages are often stolen, she answered. "But he was right. Doesn't honesty count for anything?" I asked. "Unfortunately, no."



I WAS SURE THE UNION WOULD save Maxwell. But, as it happens, he doesn't have one. The Memphis-based company is fanatical about blocking unions. Of their 110,000 employees, only the 3,000 pilots are unionized. The second page of a managers' manual says in bold type OUR CORPORATE GOAL IS TO REMAIN UNION FREE!! I called FedEx's corporate office in Memphis and asked if being union-free was a higher priority than finding customers' packages. The spokesperson said he'd have to get back to me on that. He never did. Apparently it is: the manual has pages of instructions on how to keep a union out. The subtle signs of illicit union organizing must be reported to corporate headquarters. The manual helpfully lists them: employees going to lunch in large groups, employees telling jokes that you're not in on, employees referring to the management as "the management." (Management prefers to be called "the company.") Of course, while such activity might suggest that your employees are unionizing, it might also mean they just don't like you.

MAYBE WHAT'S REALLY BOTHERing the suits at FedEx is sexual competition. Just before Valentine's Day 1995, *The Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page article about UPS deliverers as the subject of erotic fantasies. In the movie *Boys on the Side*, Drew Barrymore confesses to a crush on her UPS man. The Bobs, a California band, has a song called "Drive By Love," which details the courtship of a UPS driver and a Fotomat clerk. ("I can't get that driver out of my head. He honks his horn and my face turns red.") "I guess those guys are attractive if you like big sweaty guys in brown shirts," a FedEx spokesperson told the *Journal*. Apparently women do. I called a local store that buys second-hand clothing, and the clerk practically salivated when I mentioned UPS uniforms. "We'll pay so much for those, man. They fly off the rack." How about FedEx duds? "Maybe never. They won't even sell on Halloween." UPS's home office regularly turns down requests to license calendars with names like "The Buns of UPS." I phoned five randomly selected therapists. Four had clients who fantasized about UPS men. None reported FedEx fantasies.

MEANWHILE, THE LETTER I FAXED to Gateway's CEO wound its way to upper management—er, company. One afternoon, a Gateway vice president called to grovel, and offered to donate computers to the Anti-Defamation League. The problem is, I hate the Anti-Defamation League. The only thing I trust more than capitalism is free speech. To the ADL, Gateway's offhand remark might as well have been a pogrom. Their reaction to the offer confirmed my suspicions. They didn't want to be "bought off" with a few computers. They wanted public apologies and sensitivity training. I explained to the ADL spokeswoman that I was happy with a letter of apology Gateway's CEO sent me and didn't believe in sensitivity training. I wouldn't be cowed; I left them to mau-mau Gateway directly.

BACK IN MEMPHIS, FEDEX'S SECUrity chief went on vacation, the reimbursing agent filled out the form wrong, and Robert Maxwell was looking for another job. I informed FedEx that I was writing a story about my ordeal. Within a few hours, I received a flurry of calls, from a claims agent, three supervisors, a media relations expert, a vice president and, finally, the CEO. FedEx was "ashamed" they told me. They would refund my money right away. "Can I overnight you a check?" said one. "You'll get it Friday." I asked them to send it UPS.

STEPHEN GLASS

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
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A Pretty Picture

A couple of years ago when I was in Aspen, Colorado, debating Jack Kemp about education issues, he asked for the floor just as he was about to leave and threw this one at me: How can President Clinton justify putting his own daughter in an expensive private school when he denies that privilege to other students? Isn't it hypocritical for him to send Chelsea to Sidwell Friends School and then not support vouchers so other kids can have the same opportunity?

You often hear this argument and variants of it, and it sounds like a zinger, but it really isn't worth much. Was Kemp implying that if every kid in D.C. got a voucher worth a thousand dollars or so, they would all be able to go to Sidwell Friends School where Chelsea Clinton goes? That would only happen if they could pass Sidwell's stiff entry requirements *and* if their parents could come up with $12,000 to $14,000 over and above the amount of the voucher.

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Was Kemp perhaps advocating that vouchers be raised to the $8,000 or $10,000 or $12,000 level so that everybody could afford tuition to an elite school? I doubt it. Vouchers of that size would put an end to any hope of ever balancing the budget; and the "scholarship" or voucher Dole and Kemp are currently talking about is $1,000. I also doubt that Kemp was advocating that Sidwell lower its standards so that everyone who wanted to attend could. When it comes to hypocrisy, Kemp comes out on the worse end of this argument.

People who advocate vouchers always make putting together a program that works sound a lot simpler and easier than it is, and they seldom try to deal with tough questions like these:

- Can you really give a voucher to poor children and not to middle-class parents who have been struggling over the years to keep their children in private schools? What about middle-class parents who have always dreamed of private school for their kids? And if all the rest get vouchers, will you be able to deny them to well-off families that can and do send their youngsters to private schools? One of voucher supporters' favorite claims is that vouchers will save all kinds of money. If the public ends up paying tuition for the 10-plus percent of kids who are already in private school, vouchers sound more like a big new entitlement.
- Choice is a very appealing idea, but whose right to choose are we talking about? Families think they will be able to choose the school they'd like, but that is not the way it works. The schools choose the students, and not every student is going to be chosen by a school like Sidwell. Of course other schools will appear in response to the voucher money that will be available, but we don't know what they will be like. However, if our experience with the trade schools that have grown fat off federal student aid programs is any guide, many of the new schools will be much better at collecting their fees than at providing a good education for the students.
- How can we reconcile a private school's right to teach whatever it pleases and govern itself as it chooses with the public's right to maintain some sort of quality control and accountability? Will we require that private schools meet state standards for coursework and that their students pass minimum competency exams? This is not very onerous, but private schools tend to consider even modest requirements an infringement of their rights, and much of the proposed voucher legislation omits any kind of accountability mechanism.
- Will vouchers really provide a high-quality education for all of our children? E.D. Hirsch's discussion about student achievement in several European countries in his excellent new book The Schools We Need (Doubleday, 1996) offers evidence to the contrary. In Holland, which has a voucher system, achievement levels of poor children are considerably lower than those of more well-to-do children. Hirsch finds that a common curriculum, which Holland does not have, leads to a greater equality of achievement. Vouchers apparently do not.
- Is it in the best interests of this country to give up the ideal of the Common School? We have always been a nation of many different ethnic groups and races. Our democracy has depended on our children's going to public schools where they have learned to work and play together—and get used to their differences. Now, when the ties that bind us seem especially fragile, shouldn't we be working to strengthen this ideal instead of abandoning it?

It is easy to paint a pretty picture if you omit many of the salient facts. The vision of all kinds of American children, both rich and poor, attending Chelsea's school—if vouchers became a reality—is very attractive. But it is a fraud.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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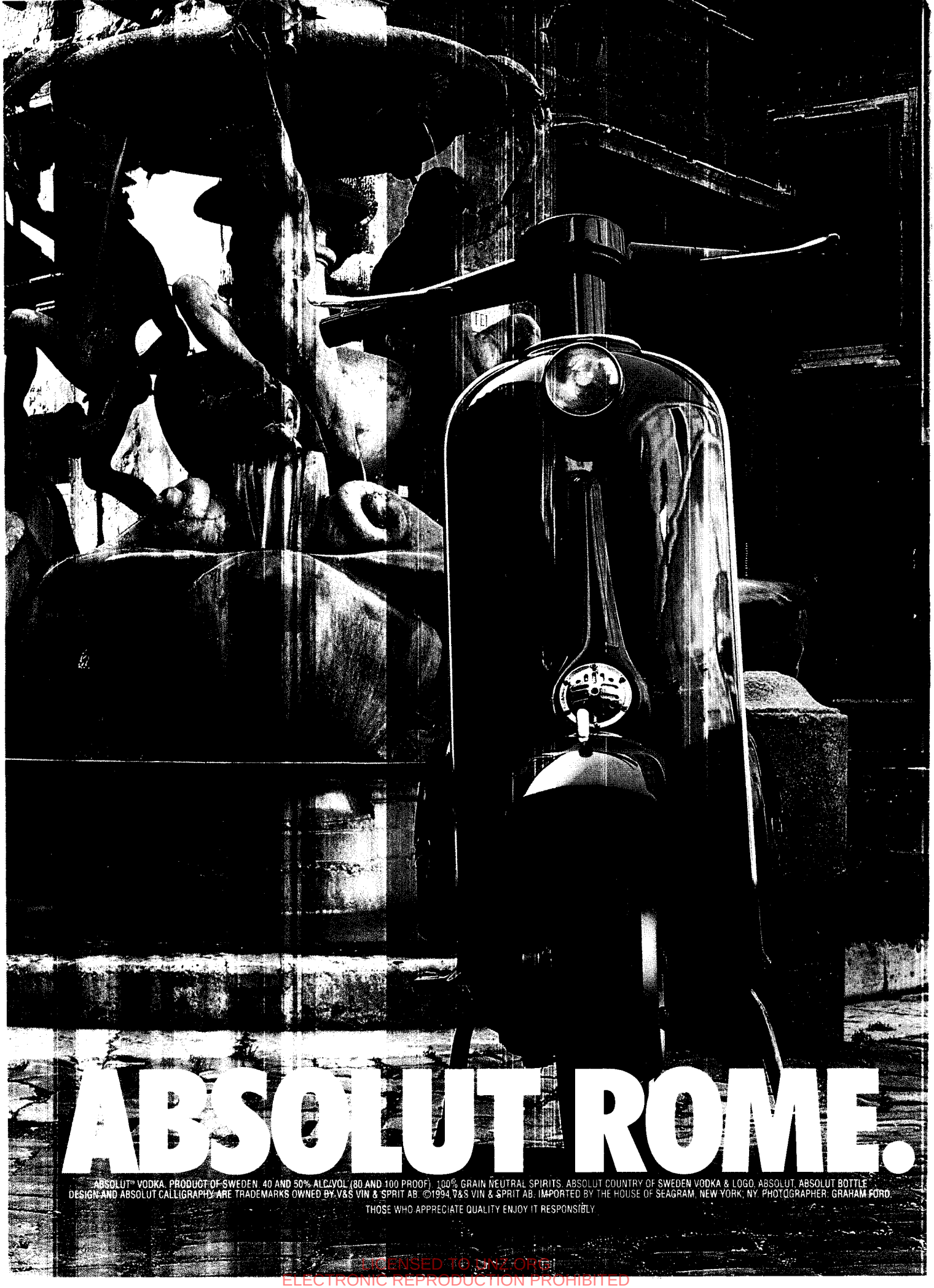

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